THE POTTERY TOWN OF MASHIKO AND THE MINGEI MOVEMENT

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By

Allen Landgren
University of Minnesota
Duluth, Minnesota

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PREFACE

Anyone who studies ceramics or has even a moderate interest in ceramics is inevitably going to come across the merits of Japanese pottery. For the Westerner who doesn't travel to the Orient, occasional exhibits of Japanese pottery, usually accompanied by large collections of Chinese pottery or a number of Korean pieces can at times be viewed in bigger cities. Museums in major cities have a number of oriental ceramic pieces as part of their permanent collection, however, the person who doesn't have access to these cities, has to satisfy his curiosity by viewing the occasional traveling exhibits or by looking at photographs of pottery in various books written on the subject. The diversity of pottery produced in the Orient is probably one of the things that bewilders the student interested in ceramics at first; if, however, one stops and considers the Orient as geographically large in addition to the fact that the art of pottery making has been practiced here for thousands of years, it is not really so incomprehensible to find such variety.

In studying the evolution of man in the various areas of the world, it is interesting to note that where the natural resources allowed, the art of pottery making in some sort usually followed comparatively soon after creatures appeared that resembled some form of modern man. Man did not evolve from lower forms in Japan,

he migrated from various parts of the Asian Continent and blended together into what is today the Japanese race. Whether migrating peoples brought with then the knowledge of the art of pottery, or whether they discovered the knowledge later in Japan is very hard to determine; it is a fact that pottery was produced in Japan before and during the Jomon and Yayoi Periods prior to the great cultural influences of China and Korea which brought the more advanced pottery making methods to Japan.

It is almost impossible to study Japanese ceramics and ignore the tremendous historic influences that have played upon what is produced in modern Japan. The Orient, is a culture entirely different from the West, and within the Orient, is found the various countries, each usually with clearly distinct cultures. The countries of the Orient share common aspects, but at the same time, are very different from each other. The fault of most western nations when considering the Orient, is to think of all oriental countries and peoples as being very much alike. This is a gross mistake. Not only are the languages and cultures often times very different, but also the physical features of the people themselves are characteristic of the peoples of the particular country only. Such is the country of Japan, definitely oriental, yet a country that has qualities that are found in Japan alone. In spite of the technological achievements and the economic success that has thrust Japan

into the world as one of the leaders, Japan is not a western nation. All the modern inventions, flashy forms of leisure and extreme imitations of the West is a facade. The old oriental traditions are still here, deeply imbedded in the people; also within these people lies the love of beauty and most of all the love of tradition.

The art of pottery making in Japan is based on tradition. The arts that were not originally Japanese were supplemented at various times with arts from China and Korea starting roughly two thousand years ago and have since been improvised upon numerous times with certain Japanese modifications that eventually make up these arts into truly traditional Japanese arts. The end of the 19th Century played a big role in the development of modern Japan and its arts, for it introduced a considerable force of western influences for the first time. These western influences, for a brief period of time, seemed to foster the destruction of the appreciation of what was originally Japanese, for it caused a rejection on the part of the Japanese people themselves toward certain aspects that were truly Japanese in favor of western tastes. Eventually the appreciation of Japanese arts was restored to the Japanese people by the influence of certain learned Japanese scholars and also, (oddly enough), by the assistance of some western foreigners who were studying the merits of oriental arts. Over the centuries up to the present, Japanese ingenuity and the many influences of China, Korea and, to some

extent, the West have combined and resulted in the varied ceramic products of Japan today.

The validity of the old adage about the law of supply and demand can hardly be disputed. Such is the case with ceramics. The need for pottery led to production, and the tea ceremony was the greatest institution to foster the production of ceramics in Japan. The tea ceremony was responsible for the demand for fine ceramic articles to be used in the serving rites and led to the deep reverence toward fine pieces of ceramics, a respect true in the past and true today.

As a student of ceramics, (about fifteen years ago), I had always admired the simple, strong qualities of certain types of Japanese ceramics, (mainly of the folk art type). I often compared these qualities with the modern Scandinavian pieces that also interested me very much. Any student who studies modern Japanese pottery is certain to come across the name of Shoji Hamada. The Almost reverent way in which authors depict Hamada and his seemingly magical talents in addition to the picturesque descriptions of the small rural town of Mashiko, located in the scenic Japanese countryside, is bound to instill a state of awe in the pottery enthusiast. Little did I know at the time that I would have an opportunity to see and study these things some years later at first

hand.

In 1962 I came to Japan thinking that I could adjust rapidly to the different culture. After much bewilderment, it was quite obvious that my biggest difficulty was the language barrier. To be an independent traveler without the watchful herding of a tour guide is the only way to see a country accurately; my first task, therefore, was to start learning the language. I did start, however, I wasn't aware at the time of what difficulties I would later encounter with the reading and writing part of the language. After a few months of cultural adjustment and language lessons I made my first trip to Mashiko. My anticipation was not greater than the realization. The scenic setting among the rice paddies and tall groves of bamboo as well as the sincerity of the townspeople makes this spot, (not too far from the congestion of Tokyo), a pleasant retreat. Little wonder the many potters have settled here to find intellectual stimulation among their many colleagues away from the chaos found in a metropolitan city atmosphere such as Tokyo.

Japanologists have written hundreds of books describing the Japanese character, the Japanese mind, their customs, the sub-cultures and the like. The books are, for the most part, quite accurate; however, (judging from comments of well studied readers, including foreigners who have actually lived in Japan for some time),

it is my opinion that only a few readers get the actual essence of what the authors have intended to be understood. Whatever topic is discussed concerning Japan, there usually can be found a contradiction. Most authors stress the fact that concerning these topics, directly or indirectly, Japan is a country of contradictions, where no Western concept of logic need be present in order to apprehend any phenomena as being acceptable. Japanese are truly said to be the most polite people in the world, but at the same time they can be the rudest. The Japanese language itself is full of opportunities to apologize, to humble oneself and to exhalt the other person. A Japanese individual who normally makes use of these lingual opportunities frequently, would probably physically barge through lines of people, knocking some aside even, in order to get a seat on a train and think little of it. This is only one of the many examples that could be listed here. Most readers would not be surprised at a statement in regards to the Japanese sensitivity to beauty, yet a statement concerning the Japanese immunity to ugliness would probably bewilder many. In spite of the fact that Japan as a nation is one of the world leaders in economics, industry and trade, she is backward in her thinking of the world and its many peoples. American mass communications systems such as television and newspaper coverage can only partially compare to Japan's excessive documentaries concerning even the remotest countries and peoples along with the extreme interest on the

part of the general public in Japan's ancient cultural heritage. In spite of this apparent worldliness, the average Japanese living in Tokyo, (the largest metropolitan city in the world, where thousands of foreigners are seen each year), might stare and comment directly in front of a foreigner as if oblivious of the fact that their actions were annoying or embarrassing to the foreigner. Such is the situation in the Japan of today, however, in the town of Mashiko and other communities where a large percentage of inhabitants are concerned with the arts, the people are different from the average Japanese citizen. The most impressive quality about the people of Mashiko is that they treat the visiting foreigner as an equal, no better than themselves, yet no worse. This equal atmosphere stimulates the desire to learn. Such has been my experiences and due to this atmosphere of equality, I've been able to work on this paper.

I wish to express my thanks to Dr. Arthur E. Smith, Head of the Humanities Department for his efforts and consideration.

An acknowledgement of gratitude and indebtedness is here made to Professor Glenn C. Nelson, my ceramics instructor, for his encouragement and help.

Sincere thanks are due to Dr. Florence H. Anastasas, friend and colleague, for her literary advice; as well as to my friend, Dr. Iku

Nagata, (dentist and enthusiastic collector of antique pottery), for the use of his many books dealing with the subject; and to my wife, Mrs. Emi Landgren, for her endless efforts in translation and typing. The consideration and help of the above named have made possible the opportunity for graduate study during the 1971-72 school year.

CHAPTER I

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF JAPANESE CERAMICS

The correlation between ceramics and the philosophies of a certain country at a certain time might seem rather irrelevant, however, further examination, often times brings to light the deep connection that people's philosophies play upon art produced. In any feudalistic society, there are extremes of social classification, which, when well established, perpetuate themselves. In Japan, in the early days, the power of the shogunate government provided two top-level strata of culturally accomplished individuals. At that time the Imperial Court had no power. Over a period of time the declined wealth of the daimyos forced them into a secondary position while a newly created wealthy commercial class became the arbiters of national culture. This was a change in the social strata that had prevailed before when the samurai were in control of the power, and the commercial class or merchants were looked down on by all. A natural corollary of wealth is leisure, and leisure provided opportunity for development of the appreciation of culture; in other words, "art". Throughout the history of Japanese ceramic art there has always been influence of top-level social strata on the potter's products.

This would seem to indicate a class preference for elaborate and richly decorated wares. At the same time, the aesthetics

that arose from Zen Buddhism and became associated with the tea ceremony cultivated an appreciation of extremely unpretentious and severely simple ware, especially tea utensils. The selection of a potter's wares for the tea ceremony use assures its continuation as a simple, unassuming product, usually undecorated and bearing a single-color glaze.

Tea was not native to Japan, but as early as 729 A.D. the Emperor Shomu served tea to one hundred monks at his palace in Nara. It was not until 801 A.D., however, that the monk Saicho brought the first seeds to Japan from China and planted them on Mr. Hiei.

The rapid spread of the Zen philosophy carried the tea ritual and the tea ideal of the Sung Chinese to all parts of Japan. By the 15th Century, the tea ceremony had become an independent secular performance, largely because of the Shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga (1435-1490). The ceremony was more than a performance; it was the stage, the matrix, the nourishment for the growth of a unique aesthetic that subsequently came to permeate Japanese thought and art, and it created a taste and appreciation of ceramics still very much alive at present.

With the secularization of the tea ceremony, there arose certain individuals whose understanding of tea and depth of perception of beauty led to their designation as tea masters. These men interpreted the tea formalities and the aesthetics of tea, and thus set the standards of the tea ceremony and of an aristocratic

taste, which later diffused and spread throughout Japan. They selected the utensils to be used in the ceremonial serving of tea and rejecting the extraordinary; they favored the unpretentious items of daily use which originally did not have connection with tea at all. These men saw and appreciated the unusual beauty in the common, simple and the ordinary. This type of beauty is expressed in one word, shibui, which means restrained, simple beauty and nuance.

Over the past five centuries the tea ceremony has continued in Japan. Throughout the period of time it has had a lasting effect on the work of the Japanese potters. The majority of individual contemporary potters produce tea ceremony ware, in fact, it is rather unusual if a potter does not. There probably is no other factor that has influenced ceramics in Japan for such a long period of time as the tea ceremony.

What is considered today as being the aesthetic aspects of the tea ceremony, were unknown in the early days mainly because of the lack of purity. The reason for this was the flood of things coming from China being used out of context from their original Chinese intent. Reflecting upon the matter forced the Muromachi Shogunates and mainly Shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga into setting up an evaluation committee having three judges to discern whether or not the imported articles and customs from China were worthy of reten-

tion. The three judges all bore the same family name of Ami, namely; No Ami, Gei Ami and Ai Ami and their particular position can well be imagined as being important for that time.[1] Because of this criticism on the part of people excercising authority, the gaudy color combinations that were often found in Chinese products were ignored in favor in taste to the bare, simple Japanese style room in which the tea ceremony was held.

Juko Murata (1422-1502), who was admired later as the founder of the tea ceremony, was born to be raised as a priest of the Saimyo Temple in Nara. In Nara, where Juko was raised, there existed a type of tea ceremony party called "Rinkan-Cha-No-Yu", which we can assume that Juko grew up to know well. This type of tea ceremony party consisted of a group of men gathering in a tea house for the purpose of drinking tea. This was not a quiet, sedate affair, as we know the tea ceremonies of today to be, but instead the men talked loud and lustfully, and when the conversation had stimulated the desires adequately, the entire party adjouned to a bathhouse where upon, the tea party goers and specially provided female bath attendants proceeded to carry out a Japanese type of orgy, popular at that time. Juko being the aesthetic type rather than the lustful type, realized that this was not beauty and proceeded to create a more aesthetic tea ceremony.

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[1] That the judges had the same name may or may not indicate blood or marital relationship.

In 1471 Juko performed his version of a tea ceremony in the presence of Shogun Ashikaga at the Shogun's official residence. His beautiful and profound movements attracted not only the Shogun, but also all the attendants. This was actually the beginning of the real tea ceremony. At this point the beauty of mainly the simple, unpretentious articles made in Japan was discovered. In comparison to articles from China, Japanese articles had a more serene feeling to them.

Juko built a special hut, in size exactly a four and one-half tatami mat room,[2] for the purpose of holding the tea ceremonies. Soju, Sochin and Sogo, all Zen priests, followed Juko and also built tea houses in Kyoto. Although the tea ceremony started out among these priests, it gradually spread to wealthy merchants in Sakai, (Osaka), and was practiced in certain afluent circles of that time.

Jo-o Takeno (1502-1555) was born as a son of a very wealthy leather dealer in Sakai. In order to be refined, at the age of twenty-four, he went to the capital, (Kyoto). He studied waka, (a kind of Japanese poetry), under a nobleman who was famous for his high education, and the tea ceremony under Sochin and Sogo. When he finally mastered the tea ceremony, he too, built a tea house; however, his was more simplified than the one Juko had built.

Sen-no-Rikyu (1522-;592) was born in Sakai as the oldest son of Sen Ami who was one of the judges serving Shogun Yoshimasa Ashikaga.

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[2] One tatami mat is about two feet by six feet in size.

He first studied the tea ceremony under Dochin Kitamuki, of the Jo-o school, but later became a pupil of Jo-o in 1540. After spending his training period in Sakai with his tea ceremony-friends, Sokyu Imai and Sokyu Tsuda, he had the honor of performing his ceremony for Shogun Nobunaga Oda. This event led to his becoming an influential master of the tea ceremony and he later performed for Hideyoshi Toyotomi.

These events were a type of culmination of all of Rikyu's dreams. They were a symbol of strength resulting from the achievements of mastering an aspect of aesthetics. This proved to himself as well as others that the tea ceremony was not a fanciful hobby and it made Rikyu's desires of perfecting this art even more strong. He pursued this by efforts of even more simplification in relation to the place where the ceremony would be held as well as the utensils to be used. In spite of the apparent successess achieved by Rikyu, his career was ended when he committed hara-kiri, (disembowelment), in 1952.

The tea ceremonies held at Shogun Ashikaga's palace during his reign were called Shin tea ceremonies. These were rather extravagant affairs with the emphasis being anything but simplicity using utensils that were imported from China including paintings, porcelain wares, dyed and woven fine silks and intricate metalwork from Sung and Yuan Dynasties which were coveted by the people of the courts at that time.

The tea ceremony guided by Juko, Soju and Jo-o regarded as Gyo-no-Cha in which utensils produced in Japan started to be used such as Bizen ware, Ise ware and Shigaraki ware and others. Juko was in

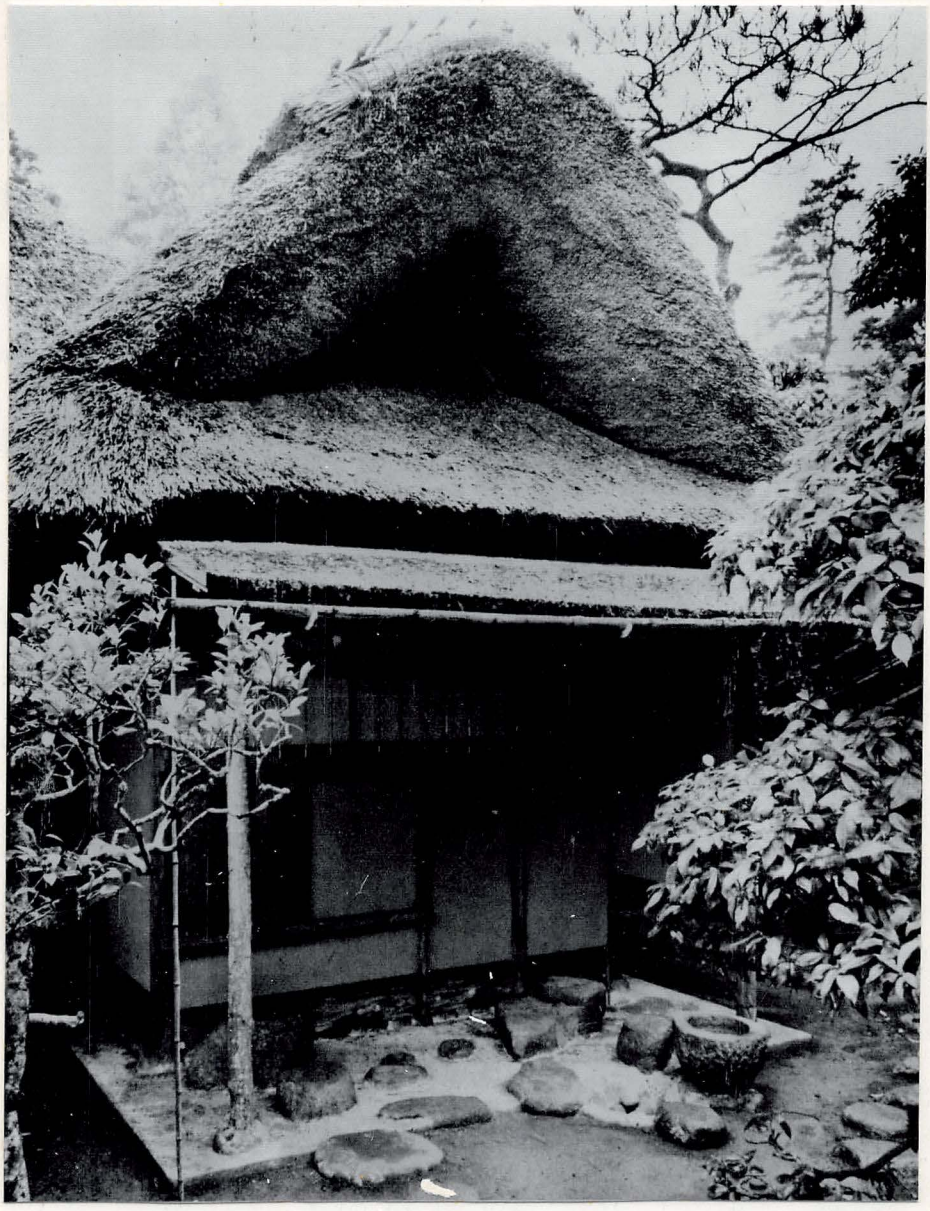

Fig. 1. The entrance to a private tea house preserved intact since 1790,(Edo Period).

Fig. 2. Partakers bowing as they enter the tea house prior to the ceremony.

favor of Chinese celadon while Jo-o preferred Seto ware. In a book of tea published in 1554, Seto, Imogashira, Shigaraki, Bizen and Korean porcelains were mentioned as desirable tea bowls. Toward the end of the Tenmon Era (1531-1554) an inclination toward the Wabi-no-Cha, (lonely tea), which is still practiced today, was popular among the merchants in Sakai, Hakata and Kyoto.

In a book entitled "Bunrui Sojinki", which was published in 1564, we find the following:

"We do not need luxurious cups, bowls, and paintings from China any longer."

People at that time gradually took interest in bowls from Korea that were not as pretentious as their Chinese counterparts. The

Korean ceramic items had simple designs and rather dull colors. It is rather natural that these utensils would tend to become part of the tea ceremony that was gradually becoming more refined and restrained. The new men of power at the time, namely Nobunaga Oda and Hideyoshi Toyotomi also were in great esteem of the Korean utensils, especially the Ido bowls. In spite of this esteem, they still could not resist collecting the very elaborate Chinese pot-

Fig. 3. Arranging the charcoal for heating the water is the first part of the tea ceremony.

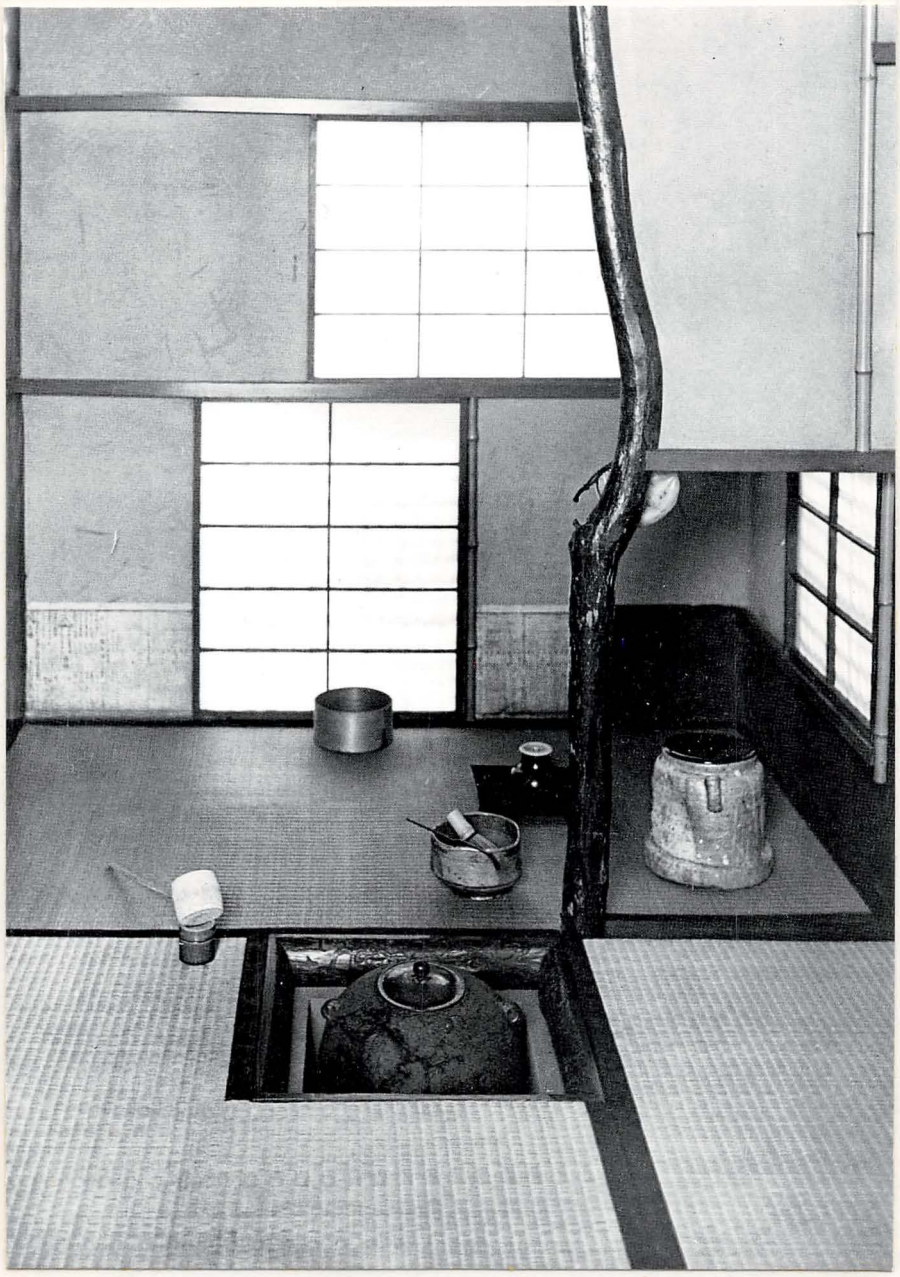

Fig. 4. The interior of a tea house showing the utensils ready for use.

tery and paintings for the purpose of exhibition. This was done as a kind of symbol of power and wealth to be displayed to all

subjects included in their reign.

It was during the Tensho Era (1573-1591) that Rikyu, Sokyu and other tea masters began to have special bowls made at kilns in Seto, Bizen, Shigaraki and other pottery centers. In Rikyu's world, there were two important aspects that he had to consider. One was his position in relation to the power of the land and the other was his sincere philosophy of Zen. He could not forget

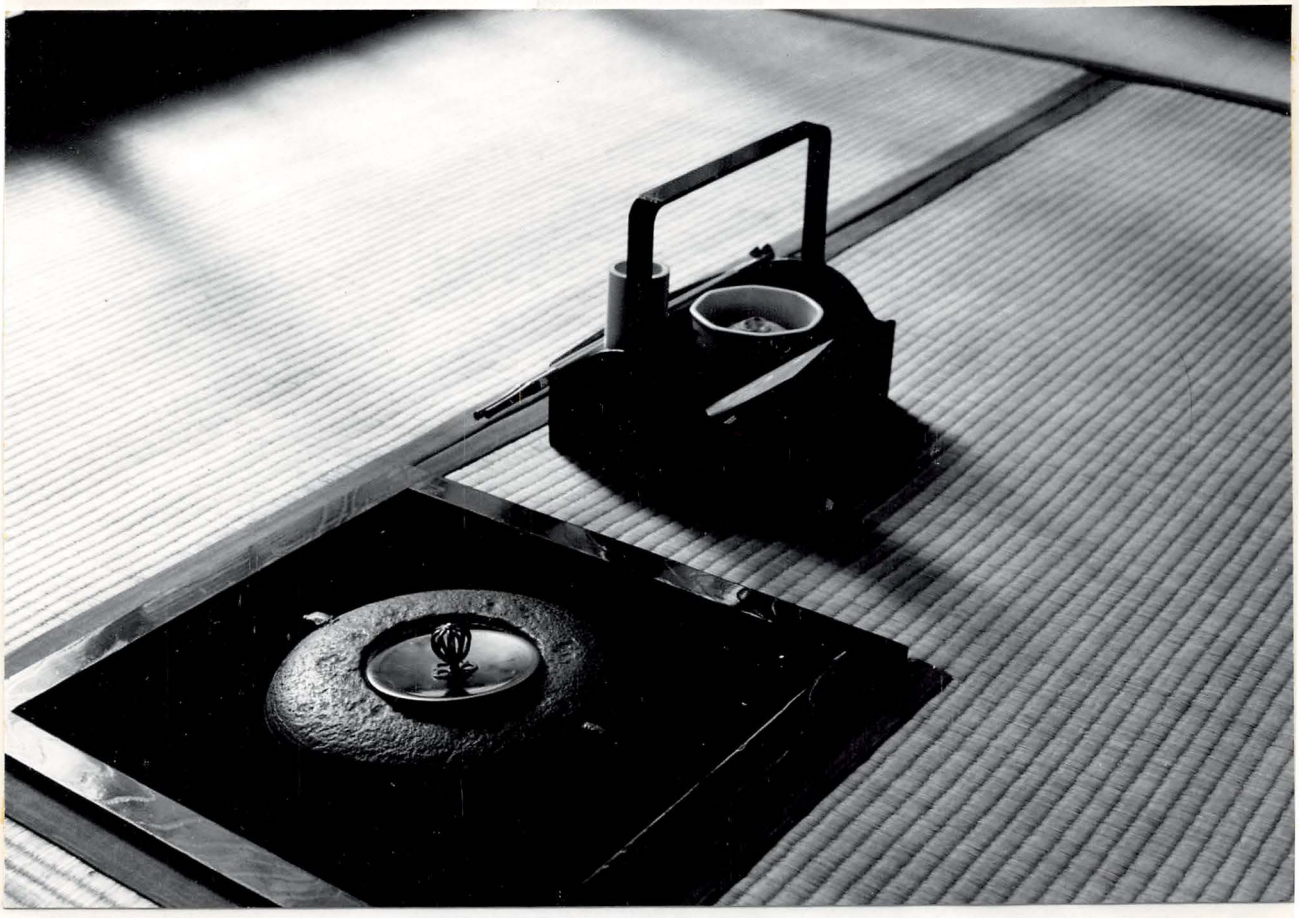

Fig. 5. With only the sound of boiling water, the near silence of the tea ceremony aids the participant in finding peace of mind and forgetting his worldly trials.

Fig. 6. The admiration of the bowl is part of the formalities of the tea ceremony.

that because of Hideyoshi's support, his philosophy had been accepted by so many. Neither could he forget that Hideyoshi's taste leaned toward the showy, extravagant, flamboyant type of ceremony and he would have to comply by adapting to this type of ceremony. On the other hand, since he had acquired the rank of "Head Tea Master", he was in the position to be somewhat of an individualist, and he put his own Zen theory into practice with the tea ceremony. In 1586 he requested of Chojiro Raku that

bowls be made by the Raku method to be used in his tea ceremonies. Rikyu found the simple, irregular shapes and the muted colors lent themselves to his type of simple ceremony. During the latter part of his life, he repeatedly held tea ceremonies in two or four and a half tatami mat rooms. The utensils being Shagaraki or Seto ware pitchers with Raku ware bowls and a square iron covered pot. The combination of these utensils show Rikyu's Wabi-no-Cha philosophy. He stated that the true tea ceremony should be centered in the atmosphere present in a simple and very quiet hut. Both performer and partaker should strive to forget their personal problems that were associated with their private lives. Quietness with only the melodic sound of the boiling water, the simple sereneness of the furnishings and utensils found in the tea house and the graceful, stoic movements of the performer should be concentrated on. This would aid in a person's search for quiet beauty and peace of soul. The tea ceremony started with the philosophy of Shin, progressed to Gyo and finally came to the So stage. The So philosophy was Rikyu's ideal and it culminated all his philosophical desires when he was able to integrate the use of Chojiro's Raku bowls.

The tea ceremony in Japan is practiced with as much enthusiasm today as it was formerly; however, there are some aspects that have changed. Whereas formerly the tea ceremony was studied by mostly men, the majority of the students of the present tea ceremony are young girls preparing themselves for marriage. The apparent lack

of philosophical interest on the part of the majority of the students is more than compensated for by the vast number of partakers that support this traditional Japanese institution and aid in economical aspects of the ceremony's procreation. Because of the interest and support of potters and their products by the advocates of the tea ceremony, there probably is no other phenomenon today that is more beneficial to the art of pottery making.

Koetsu Honami was born in 1558 and died in 1637, his life span being during the Muromachi and Momoyama Eras. He is still known as an artist whose life is an example of various talents, specializing in not one media, but many. He excelled as a designer of lacquerware, painting and publications; however, he did actually make pottery and calligraphic scrolls, the later being especially fine pieces of art. His designing ability lives today embodied in his lacquerware and especially in a publication entitled, "Sagabon".[3]

Jokei Raku and his son Donyu Raku were prominent Raku potters during the same time as Koetsu. They had done research on and improved the Raku ware process from Chojiro's time. In the mid-

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[3] The publication of a book entitled Sagabon played a big part in the spreading of Koetsu's style of calligraphy. This book was a joint work of Koetsu and a man named Soan Suminokura and consisted of The Story of Ise, The Diary of Hojo and other classical literature. Sagabon was written on beautiful paper with such elegance that it was highly valued in most elite homes of Kyoto.

dle part of the Keicho Era (1596-1614, the latter part of the Azuchi-Momoyama Era), they devised a Raku kiln that had a better temperature control, thus producing improved glazes. A new type of glaze that the Rakus used was glossy instead of a matt glaze, and it lent itself well to the enhancement of tea bowls.

When Koetsu was fifty, he moved to a place called Takagamine and built a kiln to produce his own originally designed bowls. During that time Koetsu consulted the Rakus often for advice, and it is believed that he used the same glazes as the Rakus did.

It is said that a Raku potter's personality is faithfully reflected in the form and charm of the bowls produced. A strong-minded potter's bowls will be strong in feeling while a potter of a gentle nature produces bowls with a gentle character about them. Koetsu's bowls show an abundance of personality and a broad and spirited disposition, thus, Koetsu must have been of the same disposition. Certain bowls by Koetsu gained such acclaim that they were given individual names, the most famous being Bishamondo (red) (Fig. 7), Fujisan (white), and Shigure (black). These bowls gained such fame that prominent families of Kyoto sought them as possessions in their homes and their value has been praised to this day as priceless art treasures.

Koetsu was a person who had loved classical literature and this love became apparent especially in his raised lacquer ware. His style instead of being traditional, probably was considered avant-

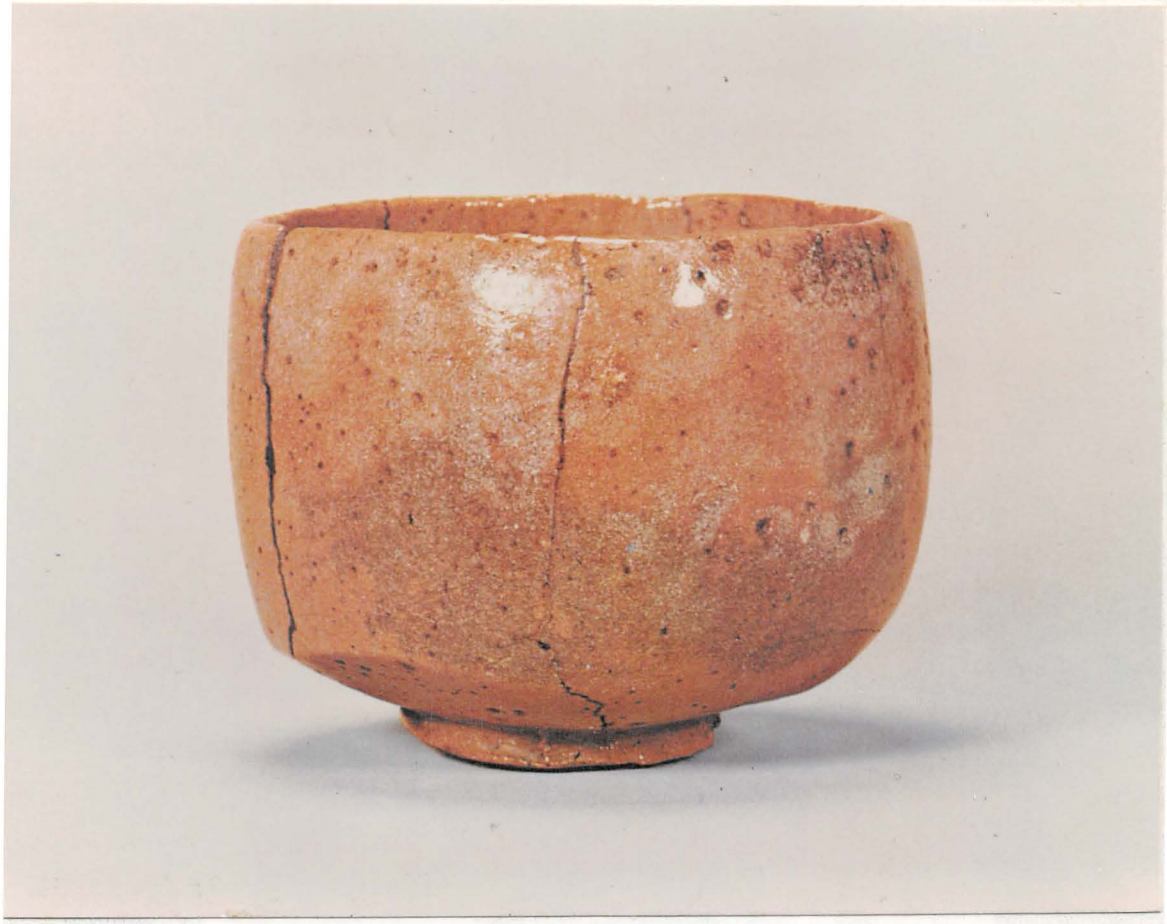

Fig. 7. The Bishamondo Raku tea bowl by Koetsu.

garde for his day. Koetsu based his designs for his lacquer works on classical stories, but his style was so fresh and new, that people seldom were able to associate his works with the classics from which they came. His sources were ancient poetry and paintings, and his raised lacquer ware was praised as being a revolutionary development in the field of art.

Seiemon Nonomura was a potter in Tamba around 1650, who was

known in Kyoto for his skill with the potter's wheel and his successful application of over-glaze enamel to pottery. He had formerly studied in Kyoto and returned to the peaceful atmosphere of his studies to establish a kiln near the palace of Prince Ninnaji for the purpose of producing pottery for the prince's use. Ninnaji was very impressed with Seiemon's work and bestowed the first character of his own name, (Nin), to Seiemon. Seiemon combined this with the first character of his own given name, (Sei), and came-up with his trade name, "Ninsei", which was to be one of the greatest names in Japanese pottery.

After Ninsei's death, a former student, Kenzan Ogata, carried on in the same manner as Ninsei. Kenzan eventually worked out a style of enameled pottery that distinctly developed into a style of his own and the name, "Kenzan", a created trade name that was traditionally handed down from teacher to apprentice student, became as well known as Ninsei.

Kenzan Ogata was born in 1663, five years after his famous painter brother, Korin. The Ogata home was extremely wealthy, having inherited a very prosperous dry goods and fabric dyeing business from their great-grandfather, Dohaku Ogata, who had been married to an older sister of Koetsu. The Ogatas were of respected stock, being included in a cultural circle of the Imperial Court and the leading townsmen of Kyoto and they enjoyed the artistic atmos-

phere that existed in their family as a remanent from Koetsu's days.

When Kenzan and Korin were born, the business and family position was on a decline. Their father, Saken Ogata might be blamed for the gradual slump due to his lack of business proficiency, however, he was a highly educated person having studied calligraphy, (under Koetsu), painting, reading, the tea ceremony and having other light accomplishments. The oldest son, Tosaburo was traditionally in line to take over the Ogata business, leaving Kenzan and Korin free to pursue whatever fitted their fancies along with providing a sufficient supply of money, estate and possessions for their use.

Kenzan and Korin were of different temperaments, Korin being the gay, care-free type and Kenzan being the serious, studious kind. Korin's life was very colorful, as he was of a more social nature. Kenzan's life couldn't compare to his brother's for interest; however, there were times that Kenzan's life wasn't completely drab. In 1690 When Kenzan received his father's inheritance, at the age of twenty-seven, the first thing he did was to change his given name Bombei to Shinsho and he built a quiet, secluded hut in front of the Omura Ninnaji Temple. He named this hut, "Shuseido", (which means a place to learn quietly), and asked a Zen priest to give him advice concerning his decision in choosing that sort of life. The priest wrote a beautiful book entitled, "The Dairy of Shuseido", and praised Kenzan's decision by the following words from his book,

"If the water is still, you can find even a hair in it.

> If the earth is tranquil, you can place anything on it. If a man does not concern his thoughts while practicing Zen, he will find the resulting confusion a hindrance in obtaining purity. So, Shinsho, do try to understand this and try your best in silence. Even if it be a constant effort to improve yourself, your success in cultivating your mind will be enlightening in the apprehention of a view of life."

Kenzan heeded this teaching and formed his life around these thoughts. He wanted to find a world where he would be alone with his pursuits of art. The affluent society was not to his liking and through the help of Zen, he built a utopia for himself.

At that stage Kenzan was already well-educated. His knowledge of Chinese poetry, Chinese literature, waka, (Japanese poetry), Japanese classics, economics, the tea ceremony and the noh drama was developed to a high degree. Besides the previously mentioned talents, Kenzan had specialized in calligraphy. Since he had always longed to achieve the degree of perfection as Koetsu, he drove himself to develop this talent. Having originally possessed a meritable character writing style, he progressed from one style to another by degrees, improving each time he reached a different plateau.

The ideal life that Kenzan found at Shuseido came to an end. Less than ten years had passed when the funds that both Korin and Kenzan had started with ran out. Due to the lack of farsightedness, these two brothers who formerly had no financial concerns suddenly found themselves for the first time in their lives, with no funds. Their family's business had been doing poorly, leaving no source of income to tap. There was only one thing left for both

Korin and Kenzan to do. They had to do something for a living. Thus, Korin chose to be a painter and Kenzan chose to be a potter.

Kenzan had formerly studied pottery with Ninsei whose kiln was located near Shuseido. He had not done this before seriously, only as a diversion from the pursuit of Zen philosophy. At that time, he had no financial worries, as he did later. He had studied Raku ware before as a fancy; but after his financial crisis, it was his idea to turn his former fancy into his livelihood. Kenzan's eagerness was rewarded soon. The Prince Omuro Ninnaji granted permission for the construction of a kiln in 1699 and in August of the same year, Kenzan initiated Ninsei into the discovery of a secret technique for producing a certain glaze. Kenzan's kiln was completed in September and he fired for the first time in November making the pottery from that firing the first Kenzan ware ever produced.

Korin was pleased with his younger brother's success and cooperated from the beginning by painting most of the decorations on Kenzan's pottery. With Korin's reputation as a painter, the success was even more inevitable. Because of the intimacy of these two brothers, the collaborated work became popular among art collectors. (Fig. 8).

In 1701, Korin left Kyoto for Edo (Tokyo) to pursue painting alone, leaving Kenzan to design and paint his own pottery. Besides the designs that Korin had left him to follow, Kenzan created and

Fig. 8. A square ceramic plate made and fired by Kenzan and decorated by Korin.

perfected new designs that he himself, a very self-critical person, took pride in.

The actual experience of operating this first kiln helped Kenzan in learning techniques and experience, but it did nothing to acquaint him with the financial workings of a business. Kenzan, who had no previous experience with economics, still lacked practi-

cal sense. Instead of producing quantities of plates and wares that would be used in large numbers, he spent time-consuming hours decorating plates with Chinese and Japanese paintings, which he loved. He ignored certain necessary techniques that should have been honored, resulting in a large percentage of every firing thrown away as discards. Thirteen years later the kiln, due to financial difficulties, came to a halt. This was a trying time for Kenzan. It gave him an opportunity to reflect upon the past.

Kenzan was fifty when he moved to Mijochojiya-cho. During this time, he produced very little pottery that had the original Kenzan charm. It was unfortunate that his work suddenly gained in popularity and could be found in almost every household, for this tended to put less value on his work. The reason for lower value was that he produced his work according to his customer's requests. The customers, usually of rather mediocre taste, were Kenzan's means of a livelihood and he compromised, seldom creating things that he himself found to be meritable. The loss of Korin as a partner was the greatest blow to himself and to his work. During this period in his life, he can be credited with producing only two exceptionally fine works of art; a round plate with a plum design and a yorakumon, (a rectangular ceramic box), (Fig. 9).

Kenzan, being unmarried, was heirless. Because of this, he took on a son of Ninsei as an apprentice and later adopted him officially as his own son. There are unproven facts to the effect

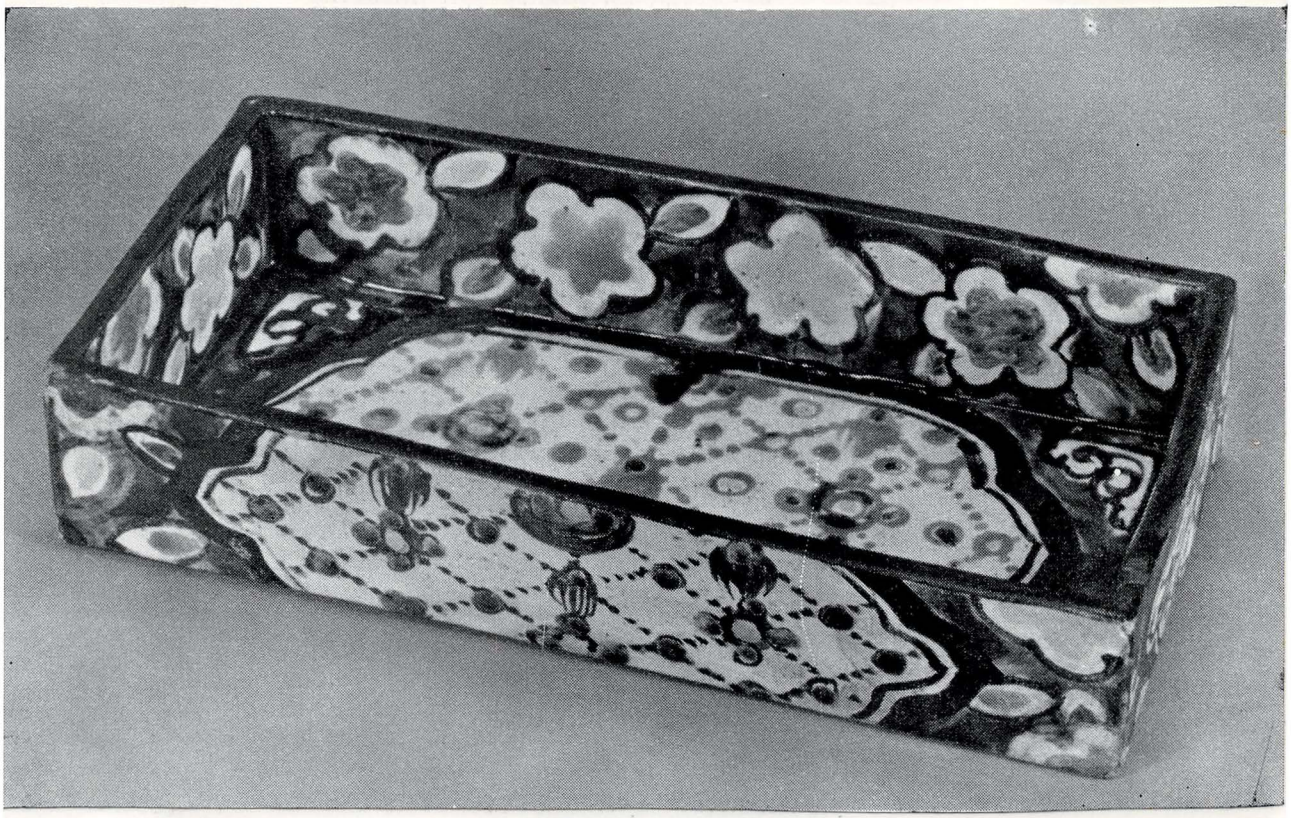

Fig. 9. This rectangular box, (yorakumon), is considered to be one of two pieces of art deemed worthy of Kenzan's talents produced during a period thought of as a slump in his life.

that this adopted son later became one of the Kenzan the Seconds, but the validity of this statement still remains questioned by many historians.

In 1731, for some unknown reason, Kenzan left the capital of Kyoto for Edo. This was very humbling to anyone of that time, for Kyoto had always been considered the center of culture and Edo was considered to be a raucous country city of little refinement. Upon arrival in Edo, Kenzan was able to build a kiln through the au-

thorization of one of the princes in the area and once again he started the production of ceramics. By evidence of production, it seems that Kenzan had more than one kiln; one for the production of porcelain and another for Raku ware. Kenzan stayed in Edo for five years producing pottery and doing some painting. In 1737, a fire broke out in Edo, razing a large part of the city and destroying much of Kenzan's work, however, there were enough pieces saved from the flames to show a fairly good representation of his work.

After Edo, Kenzan went north to the pottery town of Sano in Tochigi Prefecture. He stayed there for only one year, but in spite of the shortness of time, this was the period when Kenzan's work reached a peak of perfection. His works in Sano included calligraphy, painting and the decoration of pottery as well as poetry and composition. In Sano, his learned Zen philosophy as a youth merged with his years of experience. Nature found its way to his work through Kenzan's achieved talents. These works produced in Sano have been acclaimed for centuries and are known as "Sano Kenzan" and are considered by experts to be some of the finest pottery ever produced.

Kenzan Ogata died in 1743 at the age of eighty. His death marked the end of the first generation of the Kenzan tradition that carried on in succession to students, friends, and blood and legal relatives. Because of Kenzan's having moved to the Edo area from

Fig. 10. A Sano Kenzan tea bowl with thistle designs.

Kyoto, the title of Kenzan the Second is said to have been shared by two people, a friend of Kenzan's in Edo and Kenzan's legal son, (Ninsei's natural son), in Kyoto. From Kenzan the Third to Kenzan the Sixth the title was held by only one person at a time, however, the title of Kenzan the Seventh was again shared by two people, when two pupils of Kenzan the Sixth's, Kenkichi Tomimoto and Bernard Leach, were given the title. This long tradition dating back to

1663 has continued for over three centuries, each successive generation being entitled to the guarded glaze formulas and techniques used by the previous generations. The death of Kenkichi Tomimoto in 1963 left the title of Kenzan the Seventh to Bernard Leach alone. Of the seven genarations, the reference of Kenzan (with no generation number) always means Kenzan the First, whose works are prized as priceless items to represent some of the most beautiful ceramic pieces that have ever been produced in Japan. The beauty of the Kenzan ceramics in addition to the tradition of devotion to the arts makes this one aspect of Japan's heritage to be preserved as a national historical treasure.

The Momoyama Era lasted only sixteen years, (1597-1613), and can be designated as the period of time when Hideyoshi Toyotomi was in power.

Hideyoshi was a general under Shogun Nobunaga Oda. During certain diplomatic negotiations with a rival Shogun, Nobunaga was assassinated, whereupon Hideyoshi, seeking revenge of his murdered leader, found himself in a war, (Yamasaki Gassen, 1582), against the army of Nobunaga's assassin. Hideyoshi won the battle and his victory gave him great power until his death in 1598. During his reign of power he built an elaborate residence in Momoyama Fushimi near Kyoto from where he controlled the land, thus giving the era its name. For another thirty-five years after Hideyoshi's death, con-

trolling factors changed little, thus many people consider the era to have overlapped into the next era, (Azuchi Era), and historians regarding such things as ceramics overlook the slight historical discrepancies, for there was little political change in the country during this time. A change did occur, however, when the country adopted a national isolation policy after Hideyoshi's death; and of course, this prevented any further influence from the outside for sometime.

During Hideyoshi's great years of power, however, much reform was noticed in such aspects as politics, economics and culture. This reform was evident to such an extent that it is sometimes called the "Golden Age of Ceramics". It is said that this golden age of Chinese-copied ceramics in Japan was between 1,111 A.D. and 1,125 A.D. In the history of ceramics in Japan, the Momoyama Era is considered the period in which potters produced ceramics that showed the first Japanese style, (free with lots of variety), as opposed to the ceramics formerly copied from China.

Politically, those were feudal times. Instead of the peers and priests who formerly were in power, the samurai had taken over and controlled most affairs. A very obvious caste system was established, ranking samurai over farmers, farmers over skilled craftsmen and lowest of all, the merchants. One of the characteristics of the Momoyama Era was the extensive foreign trade with neighboring countries. Hideyoshi saw to it that foreign countries would be

aware of Japan's existence to such an extent, that he temporarily suppressed Korea and attempted political ties with the Ming Dynasty in China. By doing this he managed to control trade throughout the Orient. When he finally died, the exuberance of the era lasted for sometime, but due to the lack of someone of his stature to carry on, it slowly came to a standstill and the era ended.

A fashion for the tea ceremony was one of the characteristics of that era. Gradually, it became popular among wealthy merchants in Sakai (near present Osaka) who went abroad, then with tradesmen whose social status was rising, and finally with the samurai.

Most of the pottery in the Momoyama Era was magnificient and of a free style, reflecting the era. Many utensils for the tea ceremony were also produced, such as cups, pitchers, vases and incense containers. These ceramic articles were produced at this time to such an extent, that this can certainly be called "The Golden Age of Tea Ceremony Utensils".

By the time the popularity for the tea ceremony became prevalent in Japan, there were already established kilns producing quantities of pottery. In spite of the inconvenience travel imposed on long distance communication, various firing techniques and glaze formulas were traded by potters of the many areas and the art of producing pottery that could serve the use of the tea masters was being carried on. Even though the various techniques were basi-

cally quite similar, each kiln area had its own peculiarities that made the particular work distinctive to the area alone. Of course, the natural clay found in the area played a big part in distinguishing the product, however, the traditional techniques used by the potters were also determining factors. What is most profound is the fact that to this day most of these particular pottery sights still produce pottery basically the same as they did centuries ago and the products still possess the same characteristic beauty.

The word raku, (楽), is a Japanese word used from ancient times to today, ranging in meaning from ease, comfort or enjoyment to happiness. Historical data regarding the use of raku in relation to pottery is so vague that we cannot detect its exact origin, however, according to one idea, Ameya, a Korean potter naturalized in Japan in 1525, consolidated the foundation of Raku ware. He had a wife by the name of Sasaki, who was also a potter of known talents, who succeeded Ameya after his death. She evidently had both ability and taste for tea bowls, for her work attracted the favorable attention of the great tea master, Sen-no-Rikyu. Ameya and Sasaki had a son by the name of Chojiro, who carried on his parents' work and gained some small amount of fame of his own for his creation of a ceramic gargoyle-type figure of a lion-dog (shishi), requested by Hideyoshi Toyotomi as a roof ornament for his official residence near Kyoto called Jurakudai. (Fig. 11). It is said that because of Hideyoshi's

Fig. 11. The gargoyle-type figure so admired by Hideyoshi.

admiration for Chojiro's work, he bestowed a gold seal with the Chinese character Raku to Chojiro as a token of favor. Because of the gift, Chojiro chose the name "Raku".

Another story contradicts the first by stating that Chojiro's first black bowls, so highly prized by the tea masters, were called by various names such as "black bowls", "Chojiro bowls", "Juraku bowls", after the name of Hideyoshi's residence, and various other

names. Eventually Juraku became the most popular and by subtracting Ju from Juraku, Raku remained.

As mentioned before, Rikyu, the well-known tea master discovered the qualities of the first Raku bowls to lend themselves well to his Zen inspired tea ceremony. Due to Rikyu's initiative, Chojiro and his mother produced these bowls and later experimented to produce more varieties.

Rikyu had a son by the name of Sokei Tanaka, who also shared his father's interest in the arts and, at the age of forty-five at his father's advice, became an apprentice to Chojiro and began making Raku bowls. Sokei had two sons, Somi, sometimes known as Shozaemon and Jokei, sometimes known as Kichizaemon. Somi married a daughter of Chojiro the second. In Chojiro the second's later years he married a grand-daughter of Sokei.[4] Jokei also became an apprentice of Chojiro the first, and these two potters with their combined efforts, produced some of the most praised Raku bowls cherished to this day. Jokei died at the age of seventy-five, leaving a son Donyu, who was also known by the name of Nonko. Donyu also continued in his father's footsteps, producing bowls which were all called Raku by this time. The original gold seal with the character Raku given by Hideyoshi to Chojiro was used occasionally as a

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[4] One aspect in relation to pottery history can be seen clearly by the previous marital ties of families to illustrate the concern certain families did have toward preserving the family traditions; such were the Raku potters.

stamp for the bottom of the bowls. (These are especially prized by collectors.) (Fig. 12). Donyu continued creating pottery after his father died, changing his type of glaze from the original dull matt to a shiny, bright type that is so distinctive of his time.

Fig. 12. A tea bowl by Donyu showing the raku seal made with the gold stamp Chojiro is said to have received from Hideyoshi.

After Donyu, the Raku family progressed in order of generation with fourth (Ichinyu), the fifth (Sonyu), the sixth (Sanyu), the

seventh (Chonyu), the eighth (Tokunyu), the ninth (Yonyu), the tenth (Tannyu), the eleventh (Keinyu), the twelfth (Konyu), and the thirteenth (Seinyu). The fourteenth, Kichizaemon Raku is presently living in Kyoto, still producing the much sought after Raku bowls.[5]

Although the historical background of Raku ware is not known by many, the actual process is. The firing at a low temperature, and the short amount of time required makes this process most appealing to professionals as well as amateurs and brings the actual making of the ware within the range of any enthusiast.

The original Raku colors were black, red and white; however,

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[5] These very confusing family trees illustrate certain sociological occurrances of Japanese customs, especially when connected with well-known families. In order to spare the reader much confusion, certain customary facts of Japan should be understood. The names of people could be the result of any number of different events. It was permissable and sometimes customary for people to change their names after receiving an inheritance from their deceased father. It was also common for an artisan of any type to be known by a manufactured trade name that could be passed on to future generations. Adoption of children or even adults occurred occasionally in cases where great masters took on promising apprentices. In cases where the bride's family had more social status or wealth than the bridegroom's, the bride's family name was taken by the groom, especially if the bride had no brothers. Children of a mistress could not carry their father's name. Another interesting fact is that up until the Meiji Restoration (1868), only people of the social class of samurai or above could have a family name carried on by their children, others were known by one given name only. Such was probably the case of Korean potters in Japan who were originally prisoners. All these possibilities existed, therefore, it is little wonder that inconsistancies of the names exist. Moreover, the mysterious unquestioning attitude that many Japanese historians have taken concerning such matters adds to the confusion.

the factories of Kyoto have added greens, yellows and blues. The Raku tea ceremony bowls are still very much in use in Japan today. For Raku ware, a white or cream-colored stoneware clay or fireclay is usually used. The bowls are usually made by hand (tebineri), using the coil method or the pinch method and have rather thick walls in order to withstand the rapid change of temperature during firing.

Since the end of the sixteenth century, the relatively simple process of Raku ware has not only been the favorite of Japanese amateurs, but also been appealing to the Japanese tea masters. The tea masters, influenced by Zen Buddhist philosophy, found an unique pleasure in the direct and primitive treatment of clay. The full value of such objects is apparent especially in their native surroundings. It can be said that the Raku bowls sprang into being by the theory of Zen and also lend themselves to the theory from which they came.

The Shigaraki kilns are said to be some of the six oldest kilns in Japan dating back to the early Nara Era, (710 A.D. to 794 A.D.). Natural deposits of coarse, gray clay can still be found in abundance in the area, lying only one meter under the surface of the ground. Because of this feature, it was only natural that this area should develop into an area of noted pottery production.

In the Momoyama Era when the tea ceremony was initiated, the

tea masters found favor with Shigaraki ware and since Sakai, (Osaka), and Kyoto were rather near, it was only natural that these kilns would develop due to the popularity of their products. Uji, another location in the Kansai area, was and is today famous for the production of tea and with the combination of tea, tea masters and a favorable public, the wares of Shigaraki, like Iga, found their way to the tea houses.

Shigaraki ware is fired for three days and the falling ash from the wood fires produce the characteristic uneven glaze. The products from Shigaraki for the most part consisted of mortars, water-jars and various pots for the use of the peasants in the vicinity. At one time a type of earthen ware teapot with scenery painted on the outside called mado-e-dobin[6] was popular, however, the production has been discontinued. (Fig. 13). An interesting fact is that the same style of teapot having scenic designs without the window as well as the mado-e-dobin has found its way around Japan and both styles are now copied in Mashiko among other places. (Fig. 14).

The bubbled, misshapen, sometimes cracked, pieces of Shigaraki ware in many respects resemble Iga ware in that both possess a very coarse quality about them. This very quality which has long dis-

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[6] Mado-e-dobin means window picture teapot which comes from the scenery painted on the outside as if viewing scenery through a window. The scenery represents Lake Kasumi and Mount Tsukuba found in Hyogo Prefecture.

tinguished Iga ware and Shigaraki ware, has established a tradition of pottery that is highly esteemed in Japan, a country of a long history.

Fig. 13. A Shigaraki teapot showing a Sansui, (landscape), design. 19th Century.

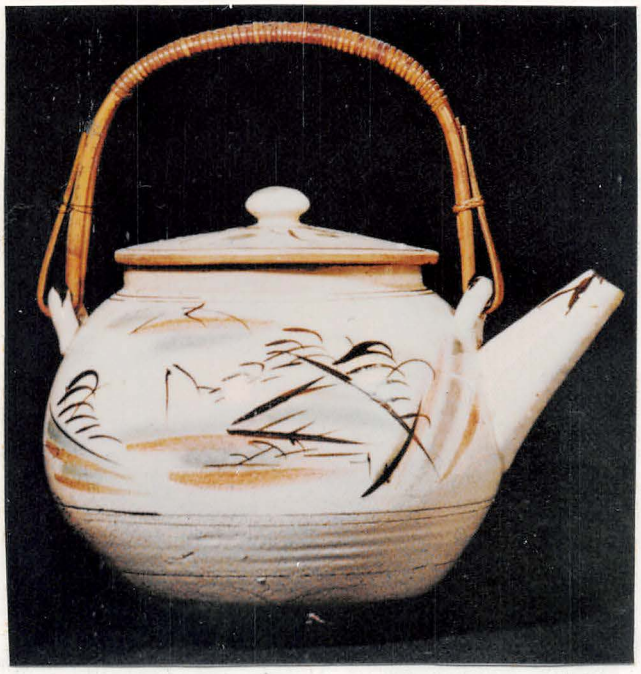

Fig. 14. A Mashiko Sansui teapot. 19th Century.

The history of Iga ware is somewhat complex. Iga kilns in Mie Prefecture are very near the Shigaraki kilns, having only a small mountain pass separating the two areas. Because of the nearness of the two areas, the two neighboring wares slightly resemble each other and the main distinction between the two was the kind of clay used. Iga ware clay was moist and fine, whereas the Shigaraki ware clay was coarse and less plastic. Famous Shigaraki pottery that exists today was made in the Kamakura Era (1185-1392) and the Muromachi Era (1392-1573), but the Iga ware that exists today was made in the Momoyama Era and is referred to as Ko-Iga, (old Iga).

Iga ware is fired at a very high temperature. Because of the need for intense heat, the pottery is sometimes bumpy, broken or distorted, however, such marks are the characteristics of Iga ware, and these very characteristics are what has attracted people interested in the tea ceremony to these misshapen yet profoundly strong tea utensils.

Iga ware is fired from ten to thirteen times to 1500°C. Each firing requires about thirty hours to reach maximum temperatures, after which the kiln is cooled for two days before the ware is removed. The ware is inspected and any completed pieces are set aside and the remaining ware is re-stacked and fired again.

The process for producing Iga ware would seem to require: (1) Careful placement of the ware to insure oxidation of the iron bear-

ing body to produce the red unglazed skin at some spot on the piece. (2) Falling pine ash to build up a glaze coating through repeated firings. (3) Placement of the piece so that some part of the surface gets very heavy reduction, probably during the final firing. During the final firing, therefore, the areas of carbon impregnation occur where the smoke and carbon are most intense; the green color from reduced iron in the pine-ash glaze is produced at the point of contact where the carbon and smoke are less concentrated. The stones would gradually make their appearance on the surface of the piece, as more and more of the clay combined with the ash to produce the glaze.

The clay used at Iga is screened, but small pieces of rock resembling coarse sand are mixed with slip after screening. The size of the rocks or their composition is such that they do not shatter, but after the repeated firing to which the ware is subjected, they come to the surface of the clay. For centuries this coarse, sandy surface quality of Iga ware has been one of its identifying characteristics. This quality has attracted the tea masters because of the strong, rugged feeling; however, it might be interesting to note that most of the present schools of tea ceremony consider Iga ware and Shigaraki ware as being too rough for the tea bowls themselves, because the coarse texture of the bowls is not pleasant to drink from; however, the rugged feeling is ideal for water and dry tea containers. The historical aspect in addition to the aesthetic

quality of Iga ware and Shigaraki ware has made this pottery a treasured item for present day collectors. Like the feeling of Zen, the simple, restrained beauty is most rewarding to the beholder who puts forth the most effort of understanding.

In the present Hyogo Prefecture there is located the area where the ancient kilns of Tamba were found. Ninsei is reported to have come from this area before he went to Seto to study. Most of the Tamba ware was produced during the Momo-yama Era and consisted of such things as jars, pots and sake bottles all being rough with a strong feeling sometimes having

Fig. 15. Ko-Tamba (Old Tamba)
A large jar with an uneven ash glaze.

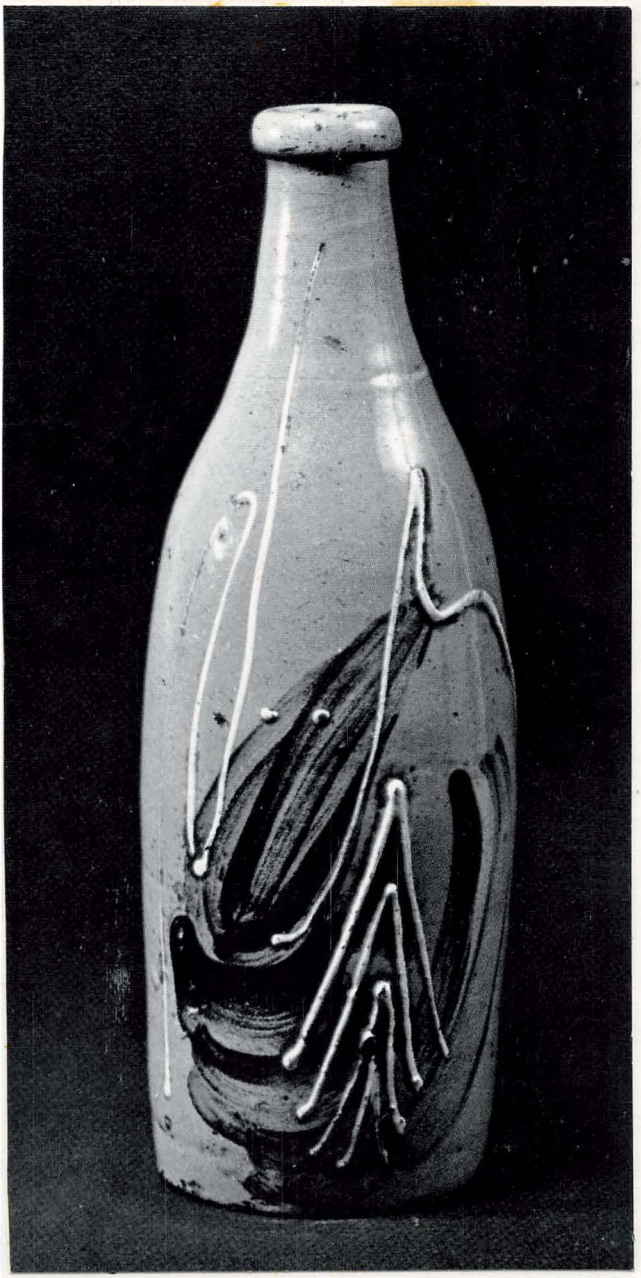

Fig. 16. A Tamba sake bottle with a lobster design produced during the 17th Century. height about nine inches.

glaze that partially covered the outside. This rough quality caught the attention of certain tea masters that found Tamba ware to lend itself well to the feeling of Zen. The craftsmen from Tamba were true craft potters, not artisans. For this reason, none of the old ware was signed. During the Momoyama Era the potters were probably of the peasant class with little literal ability nor family name to sign.

In recent years the same area is producing pottery of a modern folk-type, however, the name used is sometimes not the former Tamba.

but instead Tachikui is used, representing the small area found within the larger Tamba area. The dominant color of the Tachikui ware is a dark brown with occasional contrasts of a white drip glaze. Articles such as bowls, jars, pots and sake bottles are produced, many of which find their way to metropolitan areas where the folk craft boom has become popular.

The tradition of Bizen ware stems from sometime over 1,000 years ago, when the first kilns were built in Okayama Prefecture in the Imbe area of Waki County. In 1583, before invading China, the troops of Hideyoshi used Imbe as a mass encampment area. Besides the military, Hideyoshi brought tea masters to perform the tea ceremony and also invited the local potters to produce wares to be used by the tea masters. One of the tea masters was Juko Murata, who found such favor with the wares that he advocated their use to his associates including the famed tea master Jo-o, thus encouraging the use and further production of Bizen ware. After the time of Juko and Jo-o, a noted tea master and intellect by the name of Enshu Kobori also was attracted to the quality of Bizen ware; however, being an ardent advocate of the refinement of articles from Kyoto, he preferred a finer and more elegant quality to the tea utensils used. Because of Enshu's influence, there was a time when certain Bizen ware was produced that had a smoother texture and a more refined quality. These were known as <u>Kyomono</u> (things from

Kyoto) and because of Enshu's advocation, a new style of ware was produced at the kilns in Bizen.

Bizen ware produced from the time when it started to the first part of the Edo Era is known as Ko-Bizen, (old Bizen), and the wares produced later are known as just plain Bizen. During the Kamakura Era ana-gama[7] were built measuring thirty to fifty meters in length with a width of three to four meters. Due to the large size, firings lasted as long as forty days.

Originally the old Bizen potters used the clay found in the nearby hills having a rather smooth quality. Later clay from the nearby rice paddies was used which contained much sand, organic matter and other impurities which gave the clay body a very uneven appearance. When thrown and dried, the pots were very bumpy with deep striation marks caused by tools used to form the pots; however, due to the extremely long firing, the coarseness became less noticeable. The firing process is not only interesting because of the length, but also because of the various characteristic procedures used. Since the time of firing is so long, the clay forms could warp and become fused together. In order to avoid the warping, rice straw is packed between each pot before firing. Areas where the direct fire hits the clay becomes dark burnt red while the areas not exposed to direct fire becomes a lighter, brighter red. Because

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[7] Ana-gama is the term meaning the kind of single-chambered kiln which is different from the chambered climbing kiln.

of the extremely smoky condition, no glaze is necessary, only the ash in combination with the natural clay body produces the glaze which because of the many impurities in the clay body produces the natural, desired, mottled effect sometimes called goma, (sesame seed).

Because of the long firing, Bizen ware is known for its durability and quality. An old Japanese saying states;

> "You can dash Bizen ware on the ground; it will not break. Should Bizen jars be filled with water, the water will remain fresh. If you drink sake from Bizen flasks, the sake will be more delicious".[8]

This saying is still repeated.

The once numerous kilns of the Imbe area have become few. In the present Bizen town of Waki County, Okayama Prefecture, the kilns are still operating. Although the quantity of pottery produced has reduced in number, the kilns are still producing the characteristic Bizen ware; however, the young potters with experimental schooling have come and, side-by-side with the old potters, are producing a variety of pottery that compares favorably with the former established reputation. If a traveler should wander in the environs of Bizen, the ruins of the former kilns can be seen, some of which greet the visitor as he nears the Imbe train station.

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[8] Takeshi Nagatake, Ceramics in Japan, (Tokyo, 1967), p. 95.

The exact origin of Karatsu ware is unknown; however, the approximate origin can be surmised by examining certain historical evidence.

After the invasion of Korea by Hideyoshi in 1592-1598, the daimyos, (clan lords), brought back scores of potters as prisoners. In some cases whole villages that engaged in pottery were taken as prisoners of war and transplanted to fiefs in Kyushu where they lived under the protection of the daimyos and produced wares for their particular daimyo's use.

Due to this transplantation of Korean potters, there were about a hundred kilns in Karatsu where the potters eventually became naturalized as Japanese citizens and operated the kilns. During the time between 1596 and 1624, Karatsu ware was made extensively by the methods brought from Korea. Glazing techniques, along with a new style of kiln from North Korea, were imported by the Sue potters in the neighborhood of Karatsu. This kiln was called the "split bamboo" because it resembled a bamboo stalk that had been split in two length-wise and laid with the cut sides down. The kiln was built on a slope of a hillside and consisted of a number of long, connected chambers, the partitions dividing the chambers corresponding to the joints on the bamboo. The new kiln had several advantages over the ana-gama, these were chiefly, a greater control of heat during firing, a saving in fuel consumption, and increased production area. The construction of the split-bamboo

kiln soon spread from Karatsu to the surrounding areas in Kyushu.

In the middle of the 17th Century, a potter by the name of Kakiemon Sakaido perfected the first Japanese overglaze enamel technique, the most unusual effect being his vermillion-red overglaze resembling the color of ripened persimmons. This technique was adopted by most of the other potters in the area who eventually changed over to produce nothing but porcelain; a very few, however, as before, producing articles of daily use for the local farmers.

Fig. 17. A Karatsu ware jar with an iron black design. 17th Century.

Karatsu ware has been given credit for having greatly influenced other pottery produced later. The simple, strong feeling of the pottery and the improved firing techniques from Korea allowed for Japanese potters to advance and create works of art that are worthy of their Korean counterparts.

According to a historically based legend; between the Kamakura and the Muromachi Eras, (about 1200-1573), Seto in Aichi Prefecture was the center of pottery-making in Japan. At that time, besides Seto, there were kilns in Tokoname, Shigaraki, Echizen, Tamba and Bizen. They are called the six oldest kilns in Japan. At kilns, other than in Seto, were made unglazed common utensils such as water-crocks, jars and mortars which farmers in the vicinity used daily. Seto ware was glazed with elaborate decorations. The articles included vases for Buddhist shrines, incense burners and also articles for daily use such as rice bowls, soup bowls, cups and jars. These were considered splendid products at that time to such an extent that the names for the products from the kilns of Seto were adopted into the Japanese language and remain today. Words such as setomono, (crockery or china) and setomonoya, (china shop) must have come into being because of the kilns in Seto.

The founder of Seto ware was Toshiro Kato who in 1223 went to China as a companion with two Buddhist priests. While the two priests were pursuing asceticism, Toshiro studied the art of pottery.

After their return to Japan in 1228, Toshiro settled in Seto and built a kiln. The products from this kiln was the first Chinese-style pottery produced in Japan.

There has been much discussion by historians as to the validity of this legend, however, recently discovered evidence tends to verify the truth of it, and most historians now accept it as fact.

During the Kamakura Era, (1185-1392), the kilns in Seto were very productive. The chief glazes were ki-zeto (yellow) and ame (amber). Both of these types were originally types of celadon and were basically ash glazes containing iron, the yellow glaze containing smaller amounts of iron than the amber one. Either the Seto potters didn't understand the principles of reduction, or they preferred the yellow and amber over the green and gray celadons that would have resulted by controlling the reduction fires, for very little celadon was produced while the yellow and amber were produced in abundance.

Besides the yellow and amber-colored glazed wares of the period, tenmoku bowls, (the glaze of which contained much higher percentage of iron than either the yellow or amber glazes), were made at Seto. Toward the end of the 16th Century the amber glaze was replaced by a brown glaze now known as ko-seto (old Seto), glaze. The growing popularity of the tea ceremony and the resulting demand for tea utensils during the latter part of the 16th Century resulted in the production of the tenmoku tea bowls, (an imitation

of the Chinese Ming tea jars and caddies).

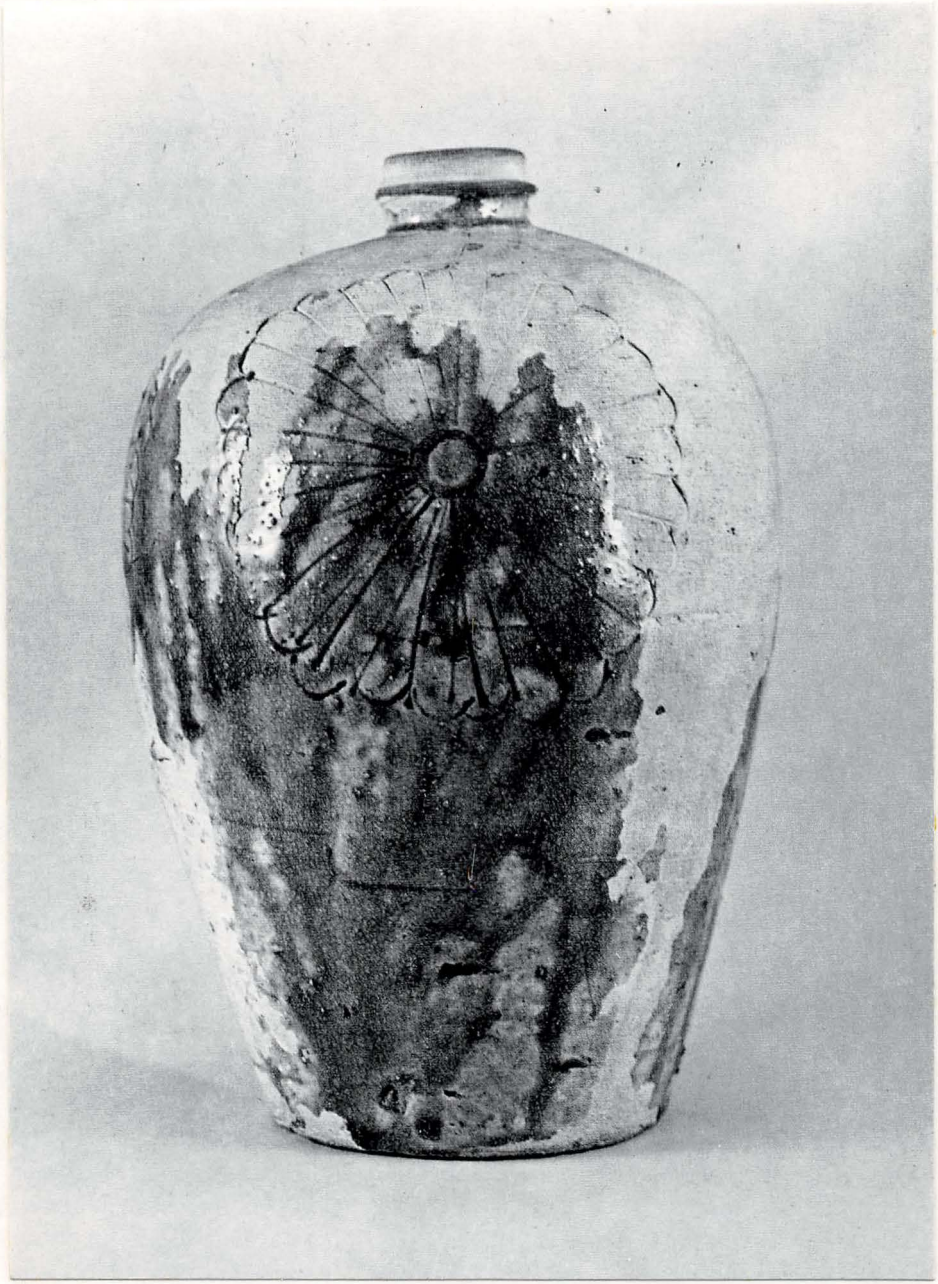

Fig. 18. Ko-Seto (Old Seto ware). A large jar with a chrysanthemum imprinted design.

Early in the 9th Century, the use of celadon glaze was imported from the continent to Owari Province. (This was a former land division of which the boundaries no longer exist.) The Owari kilns, which were located in the Seto area, were the most advanced of all the traditional Sue ware kilns in Japan. They were capable of reaching temperatures necessary to mature the feldspathic type of celadon glaze. By the 12th Century, the kilns in Seto had developed to the point that the center of celadon manufacturing was shifted to Seto. With the transfer of celadon production to Seto, the area became Japan's greatest center of ceramic production.

The connection between a philosophy such as Zen and the production of pottery seems, at first, rather far fetched; however, this first chapter has attempted to establish such a relationship. Because of the philosophy of the tea ceremony, the reverence for pottery was established and an entire nation was moved eventually to be one of the countries in the world where pottery has gained a distinctive place of importance. Without the influences instilled by Zen and the tea ceremony, there would probably have been a much different attitude generated in Japan toward many of the arts. The influences from China and Korea, in addition to Japanese ingenuity, have combined and eventually culminated into an art form which can truly be considered Japanese with historical significances which only enhance the above phenomena into being something of a higher form of aesthetics.

CHAPTER II

THE *MINGEI* MOVEMENT

From the time that pottery was first produced until the Meiji Restoration (1868), the individual craftsmen progressed slowly, but steadily. The reasons for this phenomenon stem from the fact that the craftsmen were sponsored or partially supported by some form of official function be it the Daimyo directly or the local government. In return, the sponsors gained the products produced. This led to the institution of the *noren* potters.[9] The potter was not just one person who worked alone, but usually a family or families who worked together. These families of potters prospered using their ancient methods handed down from generation to generation, their sponsors continually supported then for their products were essential to the peasants as well as the samurai. These people were farmers as well as craftsmen, very diversified and very adaptable. The wares produced for the elite were elegant, these would never be mistaken for the common utensils called "folk pottery". Should the wares be for the common person's use, they would

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[9] A *noren* is a curtain hung over the entrance of most any shop in Japan as a sort of advertisement or an indication that the shop is open, being taken down when the shop is closed. The *noren* potters used this name indicating that they were officially sponsored as a sort of business.

be sturdy and rugged and the craftsman producing them would be a folk potter, not an artisan. The necessities for the elite and the utensils for everyday use were equally important, but not produced by the same type of person.

After the Meiji Restoration, the samurai no longer excercised authority and with the eventual introduction of mass production from the west, the former noren potters either adapted to the assembly-line type factory and produced china for export or sought other work, usually farming. By the last part of the nineteenth century, the folk pottery institution was dying out. Articles for everyday use were valued as only utilitarian objects, not ones to be admired for beauty. The artisans who had been performing their arts of decoration of these utensils were unappreciated. Instead of admiration for the shibui, connoissers were mimicking the Europeans and their then current taste for elaborately decorated overglazed china and porcelains. The so-called real artists of that time were the decorators who specialized in the tedious task of painting alone, for only the workmen specialized in throwing clay on the wheel. One article in particular that was formerly ignored for its beauty and later became very much sought after by collectors was the oil plate. These large shallow plates were placed under oil lamps in order to collect the oil drippings. Calligraphic characters and pictures of birds and flowers were usually chosen as the design and recently large numbers of these have been col-

lected for exhibitions. The large numbers that remain now cannot compare to the thousands that were broken and discarded when their use was no longer needed.

The first part of the twentieth century found the public attitude toward folkcraft at a low. It wasn't until the efforts of certain people stirred the interest of art-minded people that folkcraft was again appreciated. People such as Soetsu Yanagi, Shoji Hamada, Bernard Leach, Kenkichi Tomimoto and Kanjiro Kawai were responsible for the revival and spread of a renewed interest of folkcraft as an art. With the resulting popularity rose the public demand for folkcraft objects and an uplifting of the folkcraft artists.

One of the noteworthy achievements in the modern Japanese art movement is the discovery of the unique aesthetic values of folk art. The products of traditional folkcraft were rejected almost too long by critics and scholars, some of whom thought that folkcraft was only an unsophisticated reflection of the culture of the cities.

In the complicated and highly industrialized society of modern days, a freshness and simplicity in arts was needed which could not be found in the self-conscious and sophisticated art of the industrialized present. Beauty in simple and indigenous creations of the ordinary people of small towns and villages had been long

overlooked. Folkcraft in truth not only changed tradition over generations, but also depicted the actual lives of the people.

Soetsu Yanagi (1889-1961), born in Tokyo, was an art critic and author of many books. He taught at various universities in Japan, and lectured on the history of Japanese Fine Arts at Harvard University. More than that, he was a foremost scholar of folkcrafts and led a group of the most excellent and most well-known craftsmen such as Shoji Hamada, Kanjiro Kawai and Kenkichi Tomimoto into the folkcraft movement. Yanagi's goals for the Mingei movement were to educate the public to appreciate and enjoy the quiet and unassuming beauty of unknown craftsmen's products and to encourage the craftsmen to continue their production. Exhibitions, publications, lectures and sales outlets in the larger cities helped people to realize the goals. An immediate expression of the movement took place with the opening of the Folkcraft Museum (Mingeikan), (Fig. 19), in Tokyo in October, 1936 with

Fig. 19. The Nihon Mingeikan in Tokyo.

his collection of folkcraft as a nucleus and the establishment of a similar type of museum at Kurashiki, Okayama Prefecture in November, 1948.

Yanagi was a graduate of the University of Tokyo, specializing in religious philosophy. During the end of the Meiji Era and the entire Taisho Era[10] a humanist movement came into being as an enormous challenge to Japanese thought. Yanagi was one of the persons who was in this movement together with Saneatsu Mushakoji and Naoya Shiga and published a monthly literary magazine, "Shirakaba", (White Birch). Faith and religious ideals that Yanagi had at that time gradually turned into learning toward man, especially the common man and appreciation for beauty which ordinary people produced.

Yanagi made several trips to Korea and initiated a Korean folkcraft museum in 1928 at Seoul where he accumulated a large collection of Yi Dynasty ceramics.[11]

To Yanagi, true beauty could be found only in the handiwork of the unknown yet true craftsman. The productions by well-known artists are masterpieces to be enjoyed by the cultured and wealthy, while the objects made by hand for utilitarian purposes are the combination of beauty and usefulness in which uniqueness lies.

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10 The Taisho Era was very short lasting from 1911 to 1925.

11 From the very end of the nineteenth century until 1945 Korea was occupied by Japan and considered part of the Japanese Empire.

Japanese folk art is quite different from European folk art which tends to be gay and colorful with variety of design. In the folk art of Japan, solidity, strength, simplicity and directness can be found, expressing the spirit of Japanese folk art which can be described in one word, shibui.

Soetsu Yanagi introduced folk arts to the public not only in Japan, but also abroad through his lectures and writings. He, with Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai, founded the Nihon Mingei Kyokai, (Japanese Folk Art Society) and created an organization that has been active ever since. They have promoted Japanese folk art through exhibitions, lectures, books and magazines. There are many artists today in Japan who either belong to the Mingei Kyokai or have been influenced by it. Besides Soetsu Yanagi, Shoji Hamada and Kanjiro Kawai were (or have been) the leaders of the Mingei movement. There are a few more artists that should be mentioned, such as Bernard Leach, (a famous English potter who has taken an active interest from the start), and Kenkichi Tomimoto who was a close friend of Bernard Leach. Without the combined efforts of these men, the Mingei movement would most likely not have developed to what it is today.

> "Although he is illiterate and poor, he is a faithful believer. He cannot explain why he believes, nor what he believes in, but in his simple words, his surprising experiences glitter. He does not have anything of material value, yet he has gotten an essence of faith. Even if he didn't catch him,

(the) god lent him his hand, and, because of this, he has gotten steady power.

I can say the same about this plate that I am looking at now. It is only a lowly article which is called "gete" [12] and looked down upon. It does not have a majestic appearance nor gay make-up, nor did the man who made this plate know exactly what he intended to do. The process that he used was not clearly understood by himself. He threw the same thing over and over again on a wheel as a believer would chant a sutra. He continually repeats drawing the same patterns and glazing the same way. What is beauty? What is the art of ceramics? Even though he has not the sense to think about these matters, his hands are moving rapidly and steadily. It is said that a sutra is not the voice of a human. It is Buddha's voice. We should say that a potter's hands are not his own, but belong to nature. Even if he does not devise beauty, nature protects it. He puts his heart and soul into the wheel and beauty gushes out from the plate by itself as faith comes out from an innocent embracement of devotion. I keep looking and looking at this plate without tiring of it."

Let us examine more closely this opening paragraph of the "Beauty of Common Utensils" by Soetsu Yanagi (1926).

The particular plate mentioned might have been a Seto ware piece with a design of pinks which was one of the items that people used to look down upon, because it was a cheap article of daily use that anybody of any rank and status had relegated to his kitchen, (Fig. 20). It was nothing that would be beautified in order to be put in an alcove and admired. It was just an article used in a kitchen, sold at a kitchenware shop and purchased by anyone. Among the common utensils, there were not only plates, but also jars,

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[12] In the Japanese language, gete is used in reference to lowly or repulsive things.

Fig. 20. Seto oil plate with pink designs in iron black and cobalt blue. 19th Century. This plate was said to have been referred to by Yanagi in his "Beauty of Common Utensils".

bowls, earthenware bottles, trays, chests of drawers, "mino", (shaggy straw coats formerly used as rain gear), clothes, tools and endless other items. All of these common utensils were very necessary daily things for common people.

Just as we aren't conscious of fresh air until it is polluted, people didn't think about how useful and beautiful common utensils

were. When they were of use no longer, they were thrown away without hesitation. Many decades passed by while even scholars and historians who specialized in aesthetics did not recognize, handmade pottery as anything else then utilitarian. Their charm and beauty were ignored. Soetsu Yanagi, however, found beauty in these common utensils. Moreover, he found that it was not only a special kind of beauty, but rare beauty that one could not find in other so-called works of art.

A new word, Mingei, was being used by Soetsu Yanagi toward the end of the Taisho Era (around 1925). Its meaning, broadly inclusive, is the common peoples' crafts.

It has now been about forty-five years since Mingei came into existence. During the intervening time it has been used in various different ways, depending upon the changes of historical and social conditions. As it is now, it sometimes is misused to such an extent that its sense is far from the original true meaning. At one time it was mistaken for peasant art. At another time some people had a tendency to consider it as a type of ethnic art. However, as mentioned before, Mingei means peoples' crafts. It, of course, is different from the pure art in which one is first of all concerned with pursuing beauty. Therefore, it falls under the category of "wide-angle art" or "convenient art". It should also be different from the aristocratic industrial art, which tries to be

artistic and appreciative because the Mingei aims at articles for practical use for common peoples' daily lives and not at valuable articles. Mingei has a kind of mediocre beauty which is known in Japanese as shibui. This word is an adjective meaning gentle and modest, carrying qualities of subtlety and quietness, all bound together to describe something that is on the verge of being so plain it is almost dull. The eyes of the beholder must strain and by so doing become even more appreciative of what is being viewed. Once appreciation has been achieved, the effort is even more rewarding.

The reason why the new word Mingei had come into being was that a new meaning came into existence, which would not classify with the already existing words. Around the time when "The Meaning of the Establishment of the Japanese Folkcraft Exhibit Hall" was published in 1926, the word Mingei started creeping into the peoples' vocabulary. This was based upon the fact that new value and meaning were found in the things that had been called cheap goods and the added fact that beauty and genuineness of the common utensils were discovered.

While Hamada is outstanding for his shapes and Kawai for his colors, a third potter connected with the Mingei potters, Kenkichi Tomimoto, is famous for his beautiful calligraphic brushwork.

Tomimoto (1886-1963), was trained in architecture in Japan and later spent three years in England pursuing his field further.

After returning to Japan, Tomimoto met Bernard Leach who had come to Japan to study ceramics. Leach, needing an interpreter asked Tomimoto for assistance, Tomimoto obliged and through this relationship, these two men became close friends. Through Tomimoto's efforts Leach was able to study the art of Raku from Kenzan the Sixth, however, Tomimoto's bilingual assistance was still needed and letters were exchanged almost daily. Leach's sudden fervor for Raku ware grew rapidly, but in spite of Leach's urging Tomimoto to join him, Tomimoto couldn't gain interest and continued in his field of architecture. Eventually Tomimoto was pursuaded to experiment in Raku ware and these first endeavors and growing friendship were to lead to the alteration of the whole course of Japanese contemporary pottery.

Working and studying together, Tomimoto and Leach soon realized that a potter needed to use the potter's wheel. At that time only skilled workmen were using the wheel. The potter only decorated the ware that had been made. Tomimoto and Leach changed this tradition by both learning the throwing technique and becoming skillful. Tomimoto and Leach finally collaborated and worked together until Leach left for England in 1920, accompanied by Hamada.

Tomimoto could not really agree to the philosophy of folkcraft and in 1934 instituted the ceramic section of Nitten Academy and served there for twelve years, after which he started the Shinshu Craft Association, which encouraged young potters to create and

display their works as early in their careers as possible. After World War II, Tomimoto formed the Japanese Crafts Association. Almost all the potters in Japan now are members of at least one of these associations which Tomimoto founded.

Although Tomimoto was not a potter of the Mingei sentiment, his efforts toward establishing the potter as an artist have benefited potters of all types. Tomimoto's specialization in porcelain with over-glazed enamel has produced some of the finest art pieces in the world. Potters from all over the world have praised the porcelain pieces produced by Tomimoto as splendid. Shoji Hamada has even said, "Tomimoto is the greatest contemporary potter of Japan".

Kanjiro Kawai (1890-1966), was a co-founder of the Mingei Kyokai with Soetsu Yanagi and Shoji Hamada. Kawai was born in Shimane Prefecture and was a close friend of Hamada's both having attended the Tokyo Institute of Technology and both later worked in the Ceramic Research Institute in Kyoto. Kawai was a few years older than Hamada and was quite a different type of artist, producing not only ceramics, but also sculptures that had striking originality. He also wrote various books and articles.

While Hamada's works represent strength and beauty of form, Kawai's ceramics were different ranging in styles from Chinese tenmoku and celadon to wares that were made in molds and had some-

what modern abstract designs. The shape of his wares was based on Yi Dynasty works. The colors he liked to use were the kind that gave a peaceful, quiet feeling such as subtle grays, soft blues and subdued browns. A representative style of his works is the tall, rectangular, narrow-necked vase which shows elegant and aesthetic sensitivity.

Kawai's pottery is outstanding in the quality and variety of glazes used. Since Kawai was a technician, he always experimented in new enamel and glazes. In his later years he started making monochrome wares which are especially known for the beauty of their glazes. A color that Kawai concentrated on his later

Fig. 21. A square bottle by Kanjiro Kawai.

years was a deep, cloudy pink as illustrated in the tall bottle with raised whitish designs. (Fig. 21).

Although Kawai was quite different from Hamada in various ways, they were intimate friends and travelled together to Okinawa, Korea, and Taiwan for their research and collection. They gave many exhibitions together and many times joined Bernard Leach from England. In 1954 these three world-famous potters spent the entire spring and summer together in order to write a book on ceramics entitled "Toki no Hon".[13]

The Mingei movement was an institution initially responsible for the present status of folk craftsmen throughout Japan. Today's boom of folkcraft enthusiasm is an offshoot of the combined efforts of the previously mentioned men. During the period of time when folkcrafts were disregarded in favor of western elegance, the folk artists in the remote areas were certainly considering the abandonment of their traditionally inherited arts in favor of some other means of livelihood. However, because of the continuous words of praise and encouragement from Soetsu Yanagi and his followers, the craftsmen continued their crafts. In a country, such as Japan, where previously tradition and personal pride, (before the press of modern western technology and high esteem for monetary success), outweighed monetary gains, such encouragement and praise

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[13] Toki no Hon means literally, A Book on Ceramics.

would certainly influence a despondent craftsman to continue in spite of the general public's lack of interest. Should the craftsmen not have continued, their knowledge and skills would certainly have become endangered of being lost. We can be thankful that today, in an age of spacecraft and rockets, we can enjoy the rustic beauty of the Mingei crafts that have existed for centuries.

CHAPTER III

MASHIKO

The town of Mashiko is located in the western section of the border area between Tochigi and Ibaragi Prefectures. The area depends mostly on farming for its livelihood and its physical features are mostly hilly and slightly mountainous. Some eighty percent of this region is of a rolling hill type of topography; however, there are a few mountains, the highest and most well-known being Mt. Takadate which is only 301 meters above sea level. When one considers the level land there being roughly 100 meters above sea level, Mt. Takadate would seem like a very high hill by many standards, but because of the picturesque view which can be observed from almost every home in the area, this mountain and its neighboring hills are very dear to the hearts of the people living in the area.

The naturally hilly area is ideal for the construction of climbing kilns. About fifty kilns have been built in Mashiko with very little concern as to their relationship so that traveling from one to another involves crossing over hills and traveling down intricate paths that have gradually taken form over the years without thought of convenient arrangement.

An abundance of natural clay in the area and the nearby wooded areas that provide pine wood for the firing of the kilns make Mashi-

Fig. 21.a. A view of Mt. Takadate from the outskirts of Mashiko.

ko an ideal place for a pottery village. In spite of the fact that the natural clay found there is not of the best quality, Mashiko is self-sufficient.

According to a legend, Mashiko pottery existed several hundred years ago around the Obane-cho section of the present Mashiko town. The first authentic record states that the founder of Mashiko pot-

tery was Keizaburo Otsuka who started to produce pottery in 1853, about 120 years ago. On the premises of Saimyoji Temple, there is the tombstone of Keizaburo Otsuka. According to what is carved on the stone, Keizaburo was born in 1812 at the present Fugute, Mogi-cho which is about eight kilemeters south of the Bussan Pass

Fig. 22. A monument in Mashiko commemorating the founder of Mashiko ware, Keizaburo Otsuka.

and further south from Kasama. Keizaburo received his education at a little temple school located in the Takaradain Jigan Buddhist Temple in Kasama. Ozeki Yuzan, the resident priest of the temple, participated in management for the Hisano kiln in Hakota and is accredited with instilling an interest in pottery in Keizaburo and started teaching him general techniques. Later Keizaburo married

the daughter of a rich farmer in that area. Since his family was in possession of much less material wealth in comparison to his bride's, he was adopted into the wife's family and took her family name of Otsuka,[14] (this is a custom still practiced today in similar cases). Even while he was working on his father-in-law's farm, he still had a deep desire to produce pottery and one day by chance he happened to discover natural clay in the Otsuzawa, section of Mashiko. Fortunately he had been given an area of land in Nekoya where he built a kiln and with the help of Chohei Tanaka, who mastered the technique of kiln operation in Ashido and Kasama, together they started the production of kitchen pots, earthenware bottles, jars, and other dishes. Since Tanaka came from Ashido and Kasama, the influence of techniques and styles was quite apparent. According to records on Mashiko, we cannot really tell whether or not Keizaburo was the original founder, but records prove that he definitely did produce articles at this time.

A few years after Keizaburo, Seizo Kikuchi constructed a kiln and was making unglazed articles for daily use. Even before Keizaburo, there were times that ceramic utensils for daily use were made in Mashiko, which seems quite logical since all necessary natural features were present to allow such a phenomenon to occur, how-

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[14] It is interesting to note that even today the name of Otsuka is very common in the area of Mashiko; most of these people being descendants of the Otsuka family that Keizaburo married into.

ever, there are no actual records to prove it. Keizaburo's kiln was sanctioned by the local government and within four years, four more kilns were built in this area also with the local governmental approval.

In regards to technique, ceramists from such pottery schools as Kasama in Ibaragi Prefecture, Soma in Fukushima Prefecture and the Kyoto area came to Mashiko to improve the conventional products. The number of resident potters increased and in 1869 there were more than ten.

Brokers for the products began to appear around 1868 and soon the products were taken to Edo to be sold. The items were mostly things for daily use such as, earthenware pans, mortars, various pots, teapots, water basins, brown pots, hot water bottles, and braziers. At that time, transporting the rather heavy wares was not a simple procedure as it is today. The trip involved first, wrapping the pottery in straw and transporting it by horse and cart to a river. It was then put on board a small boat that would take it from the river to the ocean and enter Tokyo Bay where it would eventually reach Tokyo and finally the wholesale houses and be distributed to the buyers for retail stores and shops.

Around 1886, the "Pottery Trade Association (Guild)" came into being with set wages and stipulations. The labor of making pottery was divided among the workers with a certain group doing the throw-

ing and clay construction and others doing the glazing and decorating. The articles produced included earthenware pans, water-basins and hot-water bottles. It is said that they had about ten professional artisans painting, designing and glazing and on certain busy occasions even worked nights to complete the decorating of the tremendous numbers of pieces that had to be completed by a certain time. For colors, the artists used iron for black, copper for green and cobalt for blue.

When an apprentice, working at a kiln under the direction of the master of the kiln, became an eligible age and had fulfilled all the many qualifications of becoming a full-fledged potter, his master arranged marriage for him. It was assumed by all that after marriage he and his wife would work together at the kiln and their living expenses would always be guaranteed by their master. They were paid either once or twice a year on a piecemeal wage system.

Here is a wholesale purchase price list for some of the products in December 1902:[15]

(1)	1 earthenware mortar	4 sen	$.26
(2)	1 earthenware pan for washing hands and face	5 sen	$.28

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[15] These currency calculations are approximate and are based on the price of rice in 1902 in comparison to the price of rice now. The former Japanese currency consisted of 100 sen to 1 yen. Due to extreme inflation since the Meiji Era, sen is no longer used and the current revaluation of the present yen (January, 1972), places one U.S. dollar fluctuating somewhere around the equivalent of 310 yen.

(3)	1 deep earthenware pan with a plum tree design	3.5	sen	$.22
(4)	61 pots for re-steaming cooked rice with chrysanthemum and peony designs on the outside	4 yen, 80	sen	$34.06
(5)	66 large crimson bowls for kneading rice flour into dough	25 yen, 60	sen	$181.68

Between 1902 and 1903 the kind of flower pots with glaze on the outside were made and a very few flower vases. This tends to show that Mashiko produced, from the beginning, utilitarian articles and compared to other pottery centers, has produced other pieces of aesthetic beauty in the latter years only.

According to a story told by an old man who was from Mashiko, the market a long time ago evolved in a peculiar way: pottery brought prosperity only once in ten years, and since the market was brisk, this happened only three times in a normal life span. If a potter failed on these three times, he would never become successful in his field.

The pottery business expanded steadily and around 1875 times were good. The durable yet inexpensive pots were welcomed in every kitchen as necessities and were not regarded as works of art as they are today. In 1880 a depression to the business was becoming acute and finally all the pots were put into storage due to the lack of buyers. For the purpose of a return to prosperity, in 1889 some

leading people from Haga County got together and each donated one yen in order to establish the "Mashiko Pottery Corporation". They set up a retail store at Kyobashi in Tokyo and tried to sell their products throughout the city. This lasted for only a short time for the business became so dull that the store was forced to close.

Teapots have been made since Mashiko's foundation and were the most necessary articles of daily use in the country towns and farming villages. Handiness and being just the right size were the most attractive aspects of these teapots and people found them most convenient for serving tea during a recess. Handiness was one merit that a small teapot or an iron kettle did not possess. These teapots had a rounded gourd-like shape and because of this the process of making them was called "bagging". Throwing these on a potter's wheel required a fine potter's skill in order to have them rounded and at the same time to have a thin, even wall. Moreover, hundreds had to be made with exactly the same shape and measurement. If a slight miscalculation occurred, the angle of the lid and spout would be wrong and the teapot would be rendered unusable. Since the most important aspect of the early Mashiko ware was function over form, the utmost pains were taken in order to make the teapots usable as well as pleasing to the eye. In 1855 white clay was dug in a temple ground in Izumimura, Shiotani County, to be used as white slip on the earthenware teapots. This was known as the

"Shirakake" decorating technique.

In 1866 after potters from Aizu and Kyoto came to Mashiko, potter's wheels were improved greatly and the pottery work brought prosperity. By the middle of the Meiji Era, every kiln produced earthenware teapots as if they had been specializing in these alone. They were made to such an extent that they were called "Sansui Teapots"[16] and this era was called the "Golden Age of Sansui Teapots". Among these teapots, there were three kinds, "Jo" which means the best, "Chu" which means medium and "Nami" which means regular. "Jo" consisted of teapots that had complicated designs and more colors than the others, while the plain ones made up the "Nami" group and the "Chu" group had some slight designs. The potter's wages depended upon which of these teapots were produced; of course, the "Jo" group demanded the more wages. In spite of the difference in prices, there were certain aesthetic merits in all three groups.

Masu Minagawa was a woman born in Mashiko in 1873. She specialized in decorating pottery and continued this profession until her death in 1960. During the golden age, she painted from five hundred to seven hundred pieces daily. During the Taisho Era, (1910-1925), because of the decline in popularity of the teapots, the number of decorators diminished leaving her the only decorator.

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[16] Ibid., p. 36.

In 1924 Shoji Hamada came to Mashiko for a visit and was greatly impressed by her art and also by the fact that she was using a very old technique not to be found any more at that time. Later when the World Handicraft Exhibition was held in Berlin in 1937, an earthenware teapot by her received a special prize.

Masu Minagawa, being of common stock, had received no formal education and was almost illiterate. In 1947 the little town of Mashiko was honored by a visit from the Emperor of Japan. Masu was chosen as an artisan to perform her art in the Emperor's presence and he was so impressed that he wrote a haiku, (verse) commemorating the event. The haiku expresses the idea of what a wondrous thing it is to behold a humble person creating something of such beauty. The townspeople were so honored by the Imperial writing that they had it carved on a stone monument and it can be seen today in the entrance to the Potters' Training School in Mashiko. (Fig. 23).

Masu Minagawa raised a daughter while she continued her work. Her daughter was married and in turn had a daughter; however, Masu's daughter died at an early age leaving Masu to partially look after her granddaughter. Although Masu hadn't been able to teach her art to her daughter, she was able before her death to teach her art to her granddaughter. Masu's granddaughter is now in her thirties and is living in Mashiko, married to a man who makes boxes of the very coveted kiri, (paulownia), wood for the purpose of keeping the ce-

Fig. 23. A haiku referring to the art of Masu Minagawa, written by the Emperor of Japan, is carved on this monument.

ramic masterpieces of the well-known potters of the area. Due to the amount of time needed at home with her many children, Masu Minagawa's granddaughter has little time to continue her craft; however, upon special request she will take time to decorate the sansui and mado-e-dobin teapots[17] in the same manner as her grandmother did for so many decades, (Fig. 24).

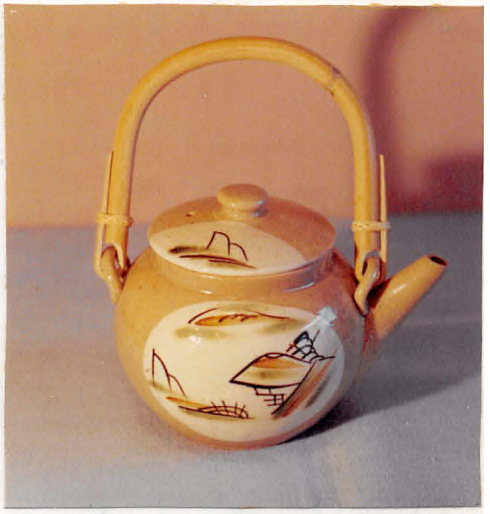

Fig. 24. A mado-e-dobin decorated by the granddaughter of Masu Minagawa.

17 Ibid., p. 35.

In 1902 the potters of Mashiko organized the "Pottery Cooperative Union". The purpose of this union was to promote sales in order to make the pottery business more profitable. In doing this, the quality of the products were often ignored resulting in a decline of the reputation of Mashiko pottery and in the confidence of the customers. Before the formation of the union, there had been considerable exporting of Mashiko ware to the United States, but because of inferior products, the reputation of Mashiko ware there declined also.

At the same time as the formation of the union, a potters' training school was also formed. The purpose of this school was

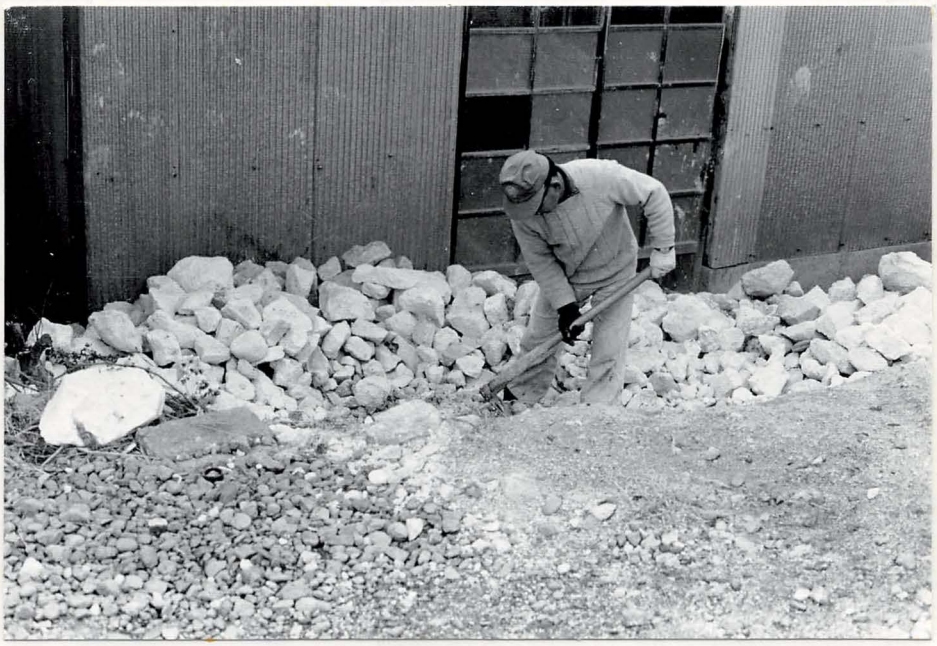

Fig. 25. The crushing of natural rocks to be added to certain clay mixtures for strength is one of the worker's tasks.

Fig. 26. Construction on an additional wing of the Mashiko Potters' Training School.

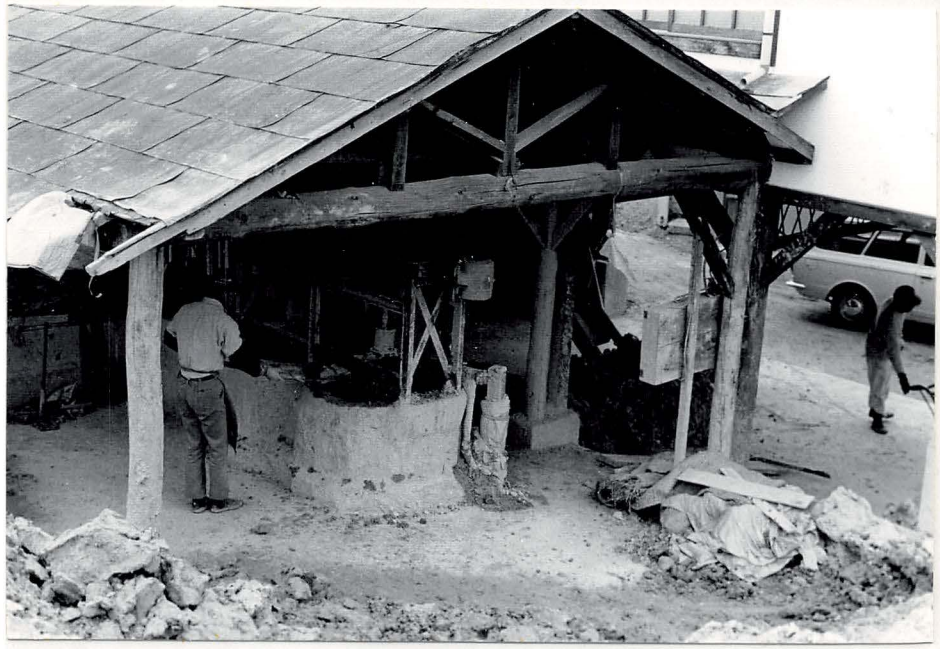

Fig. 27. Constant research on the preparation of clay is carried out at the Potters' Training School.

to improve the craftsmanship of the potters and also to make the production more practical. A man by the name of Baba from Aichi Prefecture came as a guest instructor and a part of a kiln owned by Chuji Otsuka was rented in Nekoya. Baba resigned in 1913 and Shinsaku Otsuka took over as the instructor. All this time the school progressed steadily.

In April 1918 the training school came under town management and moved to Jonai from Nekoya. (All these places are in the Mashiko area, probably only a few kilometers apart.) Later, Kuninosuke and Keizaburo Kato became instructors, resulting in an increase in students. The training school was not only to instruct apprentices, but also to provide a research center for interested potters. This training school is still operating today, where skilled personnel train interested young potters, as well as conduct research into such things as the processing and preparation of clay and glaze mixtures. The new techniques that are used in Mashiko today are a result of many of the accomplishments of directors and students of this Potters' Training School; their work, which helped improve the development of Mashiko as an enterprise, promotes the local product.

During the early part of the Meiji Era,[18] the market for Mashiko was Tokyo. Due to the modern influence from foreign countries,

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[18] The Meiji Era lasted from 1868 to 1912.

the kitchens in Tokyo started changing extremely. Instead of charcoal, coal and gas were becoming popular as fuels, which burned at a higher temperature which Mashiko ware couldn't endure. Mortars that had been used morning and evening in every home to grind miso, (bean paste), were not needed any longer. Instead, commercially ground miso was being purchased at the local store. The Japanese housewife was becoming modern. Jars for sugar, salt, pickles and other condiments were replaced by glass and metal containers. Shop-worn Mashiko ware that had collected dust much too long in the Tokyo stores were re-packed and sent to the less modern areas of northern Honshu and Hokkaido. To add to this misfortune, the economy of the country in general was rapidly becoming bad. In 1925 Japan was experiencing a depression. Japan, of course, didn't suffer economically as serverely as America did at that time, but there was a definite slump that affected everyone. Other unsold products of Japan as well as Mashiko ware were put in storage and the union was forced to halt the firing of the kilns for a month.

Ironically, the misery of the Tokyo earthquake in 1923 brought the Mashiko industry good fortune. The people in the Kanto Plain area who had lost their homes, had to eat and since all their kitchen utensils were lost, they bought Mashiko ware as replacements. The demand increased rapidly and the kilns that had been inactive suddenly were firing frantically least the demand not be met. Finally, the business was stable, and Mashiko was again a thriving

community.

In 1929 a man by the name of Shoji Hamada came to Mashiko to settle. Hamada was a well-known potter, relatively young, with much experience. Schooling at a well-known potters' school in Japan and research in Kyoto and St. Ives in England with Bernard Leach had given this man much skill and popularity among people interested in ceramics. After years of touring Japan looking for a suitable place to settle, Hamada decided on Mashiko as the place to establish a residence. This decision surprised the residents of Mashiko as well as other people. Why should this famous man choose such a place? The reasons included these: the natural features and necessities were to his liking. The natural clay was not of the best quality in Japan, but what was there was adequate and abundant. The nearby pine forests provided wood for the kilns. The gently sloping hills provided a good base for the construction of the climbing kilns and the old pottery techniques were still practiced and more or less preserved, a fact which Hamada found to his liking. At the same time, a man by the name of Soetsu Yanagi started the Mingei movement and together with Hamada's skill and Yanagi's philosophy, Mashiko ware had made steady headway.

As World War II flared, simultaneously came the withdrawal of all metal goods from the average Japanese. The Japanese house-

wife who had used metal utensils in the kitchen was urged into being patriotic and one way was to substitute ceramic dishes in place of those made of metal. Metal was needed in ever greater volume in the production of weapons. Inexpensive yet durable Mashiko ware was found to be quite suitable at that time and consequently, the kilns of Mashiko again barely had time to cool. This spurt, however, didn't last long for as the war grew more violent and became worse for the Japanese, the draft took many of the able potters away from Mashiko into the army. In order to avoid leaving some of the kilns idle due to the absence of potters who were drafted, the government contemplated consolidation of the kilns in order to have as many kilns operating with the least numbers of males working.

In 1943 Nobusuke Kishi, Minister of Commerce, came to Mashiko on inspection. Mashiko was certainly a manufacturing area, however, unlike the employee organizations of large factories Mashiko was different. In each kiln, craftsmen, workers, wives, children, apprentices and owners were regarded as all members of a large family, each enjoying a certain position of rank and authority. (This is very typical of most Japanese small enterprises and is still practiced today.) In this situation, when there was work to do, every member devoted as much time as he felt he should. There was a strong sense of duty and responsibility that everyone felt and no one was interested in calculating the amount of time and work that

other members did. The very able did more than the less able. This was expected and remained unquestioned.

The intent of the governmental consolidation was to set a regimented scale of work and hours on each proposed consolidated group and impose these regulations in order to increase production. As in most places, the persons of the area with the most fame or prestige are the people whose words are heeded the most. This was true in Mashiko also and when Shoji Hamada himself explained the circumstances to the minister, his words were heard and Mashiko remained a town of private industries as before. There was no consolidation.

Three years after Keizaburo Otsuka started his first kiln in 1853, five kilns were operating a rather small but profitable business. The enterprise at that time was, of course, a side line to farming. One hundred twenty years have lapsed since then and pottery is a very important business to this community now. Without the use of large factory type machines to mass produce the pottery, this business is existing and quite profitably. The reasons for this continued existence are as mentioned before: an abundance of local clay and wood, natural hills for the construction of the climbing kilns and energetic people, devoting their time to make the enterprise a success. All these elements are happily situated in a peaceful area just far enough away from a large populated

center in order to avoid disturbance and just close enough to promote sales to the customers.

We can re-examine the following aspects when we review the history of the industrial development of Mashiko.

(1) Many of the enterprisers were working on farms part-time, therefore, they had durability and adaptability toward a changing situation.

(2) Local wealthy influential people who had a deep relationship with the potters, took the place of brokers, therefore, the Mashiko Enterprise has existed this long and has been prosperous.

(3) Since the beginning, there has been pertinent support from the local official government. This is quite interesting when one considers the fact that such support started during the days of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

The official function or official local government has been mentioned previously a number of times, a circumstance which has to be explained now in order to clarify how important a part official help played in the development of Mashiko.

In comparison to many phenomena in Japan, Mashiko has a very short history. Mashiko pottery came into being during the last part of the very long Tokugawa Shogunate. The Meiji Restoration was a tremendous shock to a Japan that had been steeped in the

Tokugawa tradition for so many years. Mashiko went through this change very little worse for the pressures and still maintained as much dependence on the official function as it did before.

Yahei Mita was a county official when the Mashiko business was alleged to have been founded by Keizaburo Otsuka. Mita founded a loan system for the development of the enterprise. He was not only a county official, but also in charge of finance for the Kurobane Feudal Clan of that area and it was quite obvious that he withdrew money as a sort of investment for the clan in order to raise money for the Mashiko Enterprises.

Yahei's fervor for Mashiko pottery was not only because of the possible economic good fortune for the clan, but also, since he was a man of refined taste who composed poems himself and loved pottery, he wanted to assist in the promotion of something beautiful that he held so much empathy for. A tokkuri (sake bottle) that he himself designed was named Yahei Tokkuri after him and still remains as artifacts with official loans and documents signed by him.

Because of this official support, the Mashiko Enterprise grew so fast that the enterprise was able to ship wares to Edo, by means of the funds procured from the Kurobane Clan. In 1875 the number of kilns increased to 35 and Mashiko ware was very successful as a commodity. Due to an inflation caused by a small (and the last) civil war in Japan, the Mashiko Enterprises suffered again. The local wealthy people bore the expenses among themselves and founded

a store in Tokyo. This and the Potters' Training School was discussed briefly before. Mention is made again only to emphasize the importance of the school and the first company in establishing Mashiko in the business world. Without these and the accompanying support, Mashiko could have never developed to what it is today.

Before World War II, there were about twenty brokers for Mashiko ware who mainly did cargo booking and shipping to the local wholesale stores. Quite a few of these brokers were local men of wealth. These people at that time naturally participated in management of the enterprise through their business.

The potters of that time did not have to think of the operation of the business; they had only to devote their efforts toward the production of technically good and aesthetic wares. Their living expenses were also well taken care of by the brokers; potters bought equipment, materials, sometimes even clothing and food purchased on credit under the name of a broker. Its formality was such that a potter paid by draft which had been issued by a broker by a rather simple process. We can imagine how much the brokers were trusted by the local people. Around 1910, the previously mentioned slump in the business was felt little by the potters themselves due to the distinguished services offered by these old-time brokers.

Fig. 28. A view of the newer section of Mashiko showing nothing, but new pottery shops.

At the present, (1972), there are about seventy independently recognized potters and about seven hundred workers working for the kilns. This is not to mention the many apprentice-like students studying with the individual potters. Mashiko is a pottery district where their yearly estimated turnout is around 600,000,000 yen (about two million dollars). In comparison to other indus-

trial pottery towns where modern pottery-producing machines are used, we cannot say that Mashiko is a large pottery town, but it is a very distinctive one in regard to the Mingei movement.

In this mechanized era, shibusa, (a noun meaning restrained beauty and subtle nuance), which only can be made from the material that has the tradition of hand-made products and good potters' clay, has attracted people not only in Japan, but also in foreign countries and has made the town of Mashiko one of the most prominent places of the ceramic world. The town assumes the form of incorporation, consisting of one joint stock company and nine limited companies. The rest is all private enterprise. At each kiln, there are on the average of three or four workers, (both men and women) and both employer and employee work together.

Fig. 29. A new pottery shop being constructed.

Their main products are Mingei products consisting of flower-vases, tea-sets, tableware and other household items. Recently the manufacturing of Mingei-style tiles for the sides of buildings has become popular. (These are not the traditional Japanese roof tiles. They are rather thick and rustic and lend themselves to the enhancement of entrances and arbors, especially of modern buildings). Besides the tile production, a pot-type, disposable container for rice lunches sold at train stations is also produced. As for enterprise, these two items will probably grow in the future as a new aspect for prosperity, especially the tile.

Fig. 30. Children of Mashiko returning home from school pass piles of wood used in the kilns.

Fig. 31. Stacks of pine wood for the kilns of Mashiko.

Fig. 32. The owner of the oldest pottery shop in Mashiko: "Mingeiten-Mashiko", named by Shoji Hamada.

Fig. 33. The Mingeiten-Mashiko is known for having the prized works of the old, established potters as well as the younger potters.

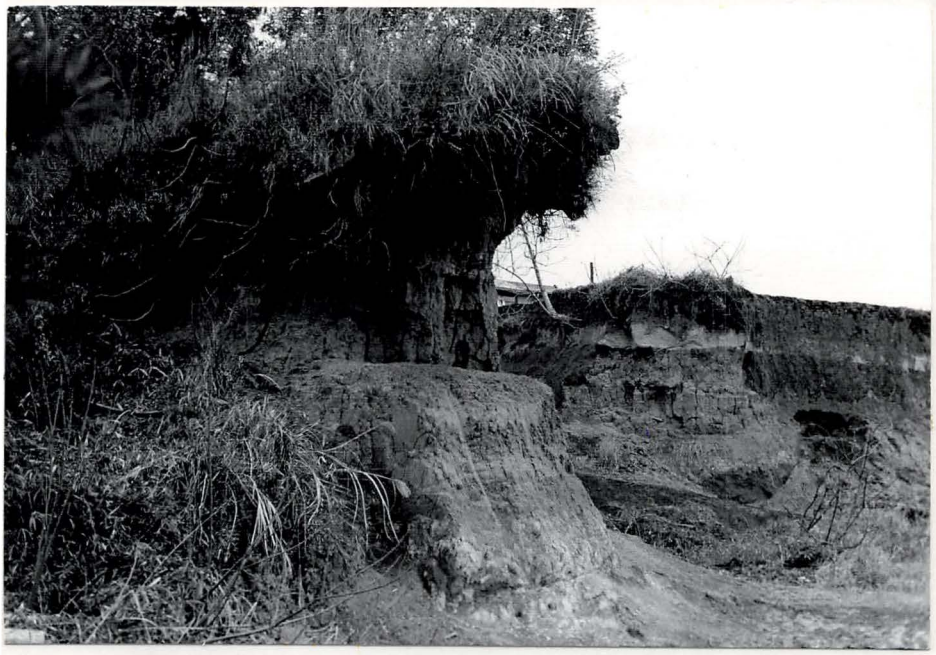

Fig. 34. This undercut bank in Mashiko shows the natural clay that is so abundant.

Fig. 35. One small shop in Mashiko specializes in making reproductions of <u>haniwa</u>.

Fig. 36. Stacks of various green ware including doughnut-shaped sake bottles.

Fig. 37. A worker setting green ware out in the sun to dry.

If anyone were to choose a person who has done the most to promote the area of Mashiko, there would be little doubt in anyone's mind. This person is most surely Shoji Hamada. Hamada's

Fig. 38. Shoji Hamada cataloguing his pots for an exhibit.

promotion of the Mingei movement in addition to his drawing of promising students, who later establish prominent reputations of their own, benefits the area greatly. The honor of receiving the title of "Intangible National Living Treasure" from the government of Japan, as well as being appointed into the position of Director of the Mingeikan upon Soetsu Yanagi's death, has certainly brought much prestige to Hamada as well as Mashiko. All these tasks at an advanced age would seem to be very trying, however, Shoji Hamada finds time to attend to them as well as travel,

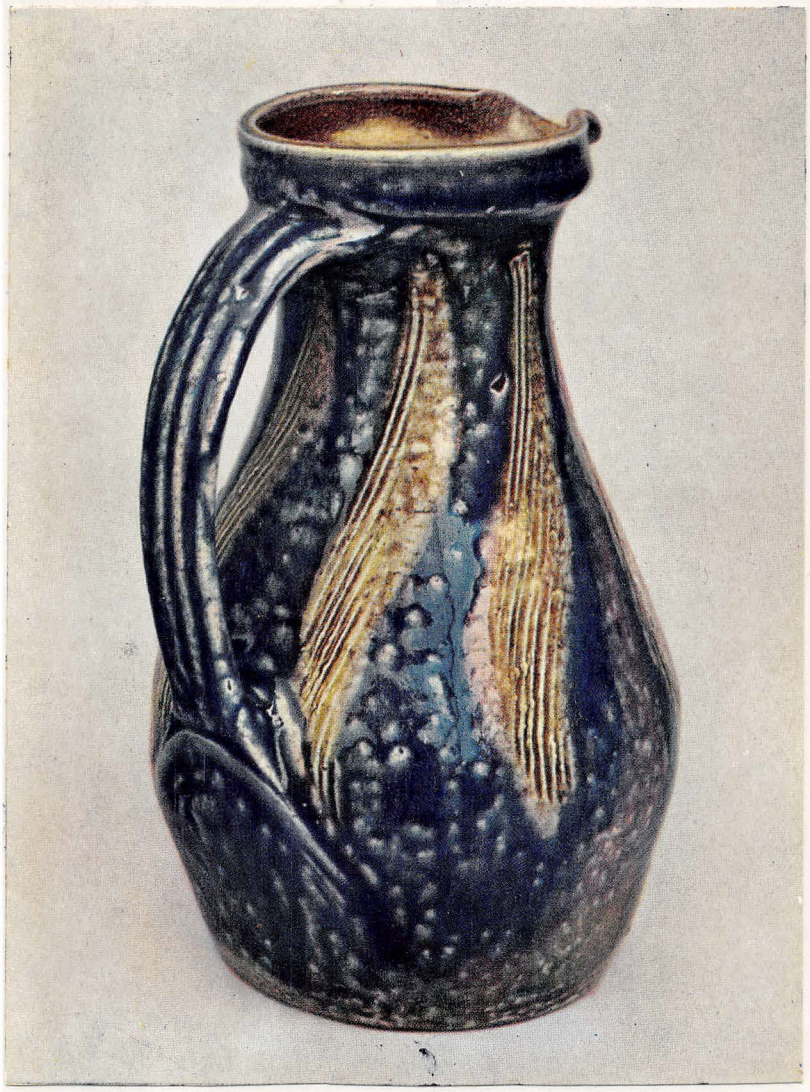

Fig. 39. Shoji Hamada: Large pitcher with a salt glaze.

study and create pottery for his exhibits; a schedule a lesser man would surely find pressing. Shoji Hamada has two sons who follow in their father's footsteps. As their father, these sons must find the experience of living in the large country farmhouse in Mashiko and raising a family, while producing things of ceramic beauty, an ideal form of life.

Fig. 40. Shoji Hamada: A teacup showing red and green over-enamel so characteristic of his later work. The enamel is fired a third time at a lower temperature.

Fig. 41. A view of the countryside in front of Hamada's residence.

Fig. 42. The gate structure of Hamada's farmhouse-type residence.

Fig. 43. Hamada's recent exhibit of December, 1971, at the, (very reputable), Mitsukoshi Department Store in Nihonbashi, Tokyo. It is interesting to note that although Hamada's large bowls, (as seen above), are priced at over $1,200.00, there is no lack of willing buyers.

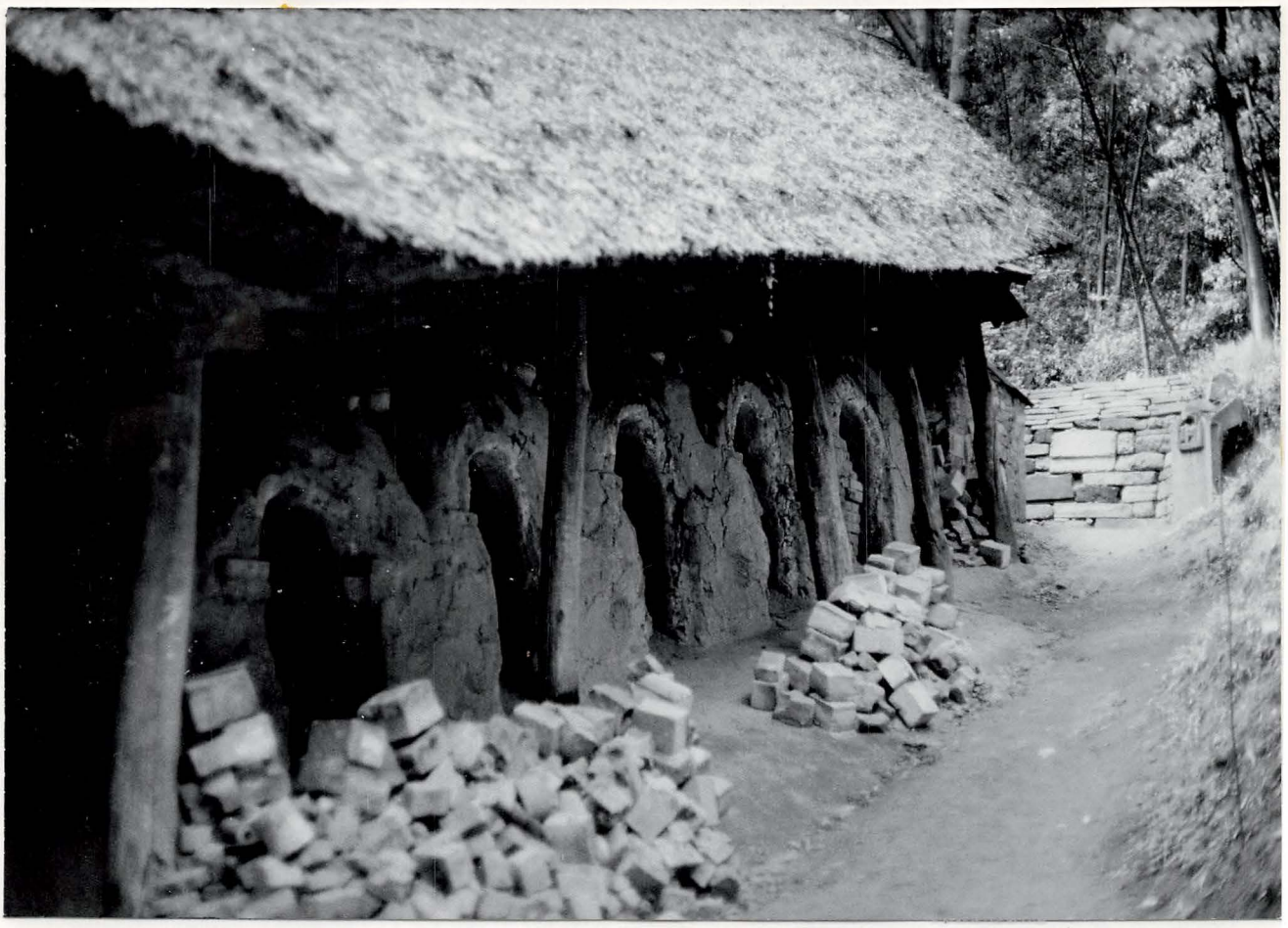

Fig. 44. Hamada's kiln.

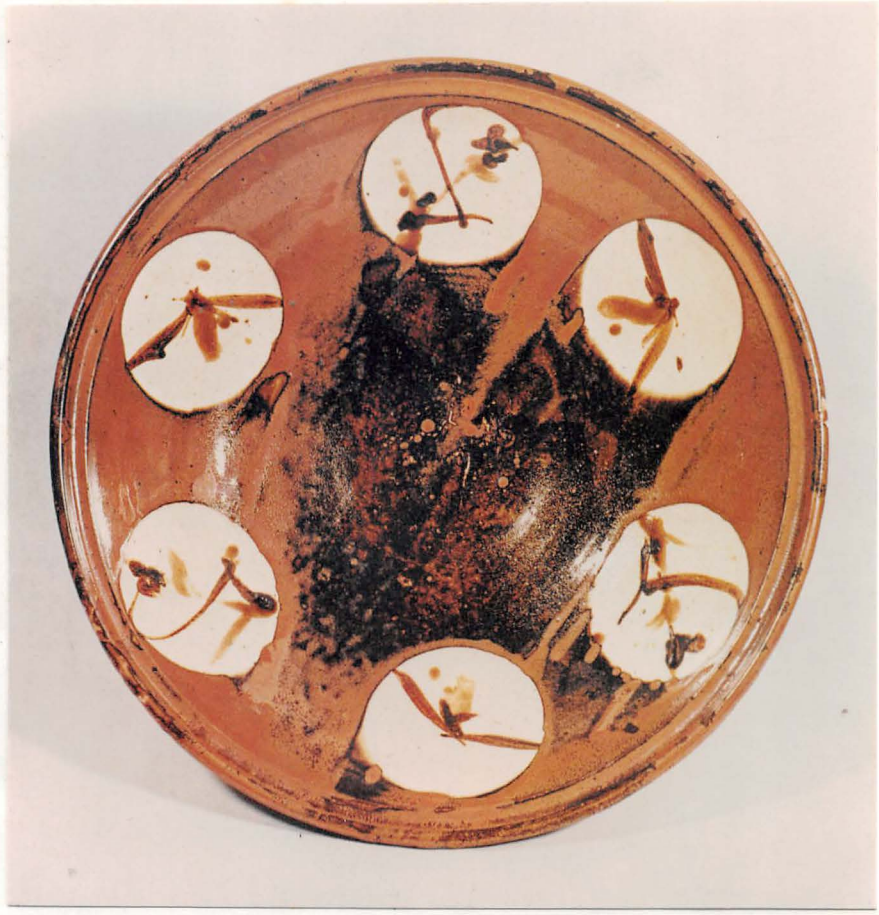

Fig. 45.
Shoji Hamada: Large bowl showing the typical Hamada brush technique under wax-resist circles. The reddish glaze is kaki and the black is tenmoku.

Fig. 46.
Shoji Hamada: Tea bowl with a salt glaze.

There is a big house in Mashiko that has stood since the days of the feudal lords. It has a straw thatched roof and it stands in a very conspicuous area surrounded by large trees and spacious gardens. The owner, Ichiro Kimura, is a lover of hunting and for this reason, several large hunting dogs can usually be seen lying around the yard. Because of this love of hunting, Kimura spends much time with his dogs in the nearby forests and woodlands. On his many varied hunting trips he not only is in search of game, but also gathers the essence of nature and rugged beauty that he incorporates in his works.

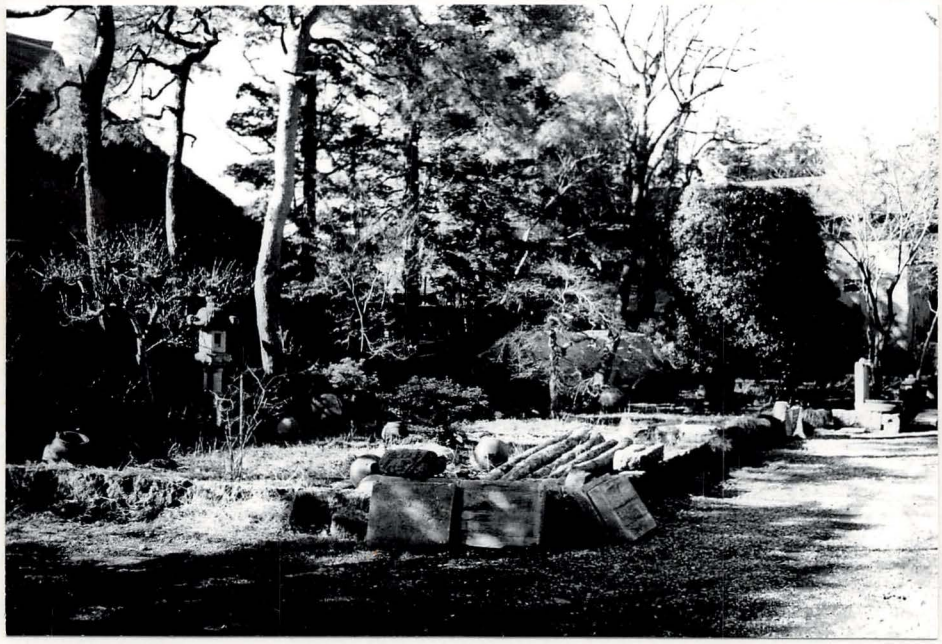

Fig. 47. The garden in front of Ichiro Kimura's house.

Kimura, being formerly a member of the Mashiko Post Office staff, change his occupation during his late thirties. In May 1949, he built a kiln and started firing in September of the same year. Although it has not been long since the kiln was constructed, Kimura's relation with pottery is old. His father was engaged mainly with the decorating technique of over-glazing in a training school (the present Pottery Institute of Tochigi Prefecture). At the Kimuras' home is a large plate with a peacock feather design and a penstand made by his father. Of these things, only one word can be used to describe them, "Splendid".

Ichiro inherited a love of ceramics from his father. Before he built the kiln, he attended the National Pottery Research Station of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in Kyoto for three years.

Although he regards Mingei as reference, Kimura's style is based upon ceramics and china throughout the Orient. His aim is always at how he can show his talent and dignity in his pottery. He often uses the neriage technique, which existed in the Sung Dynasty in China. This consists of partially mixing two colors of clay and constructing his pieces so that the two colors flow in a natural pattern when they come together. He has made a number of jars and vases using this method that have received much acclaim. They have a feeling of the old about them, yet appear to be almost Danish modern in design. Since he does not agree with mass pro-

duction, he fires the kilns only twice a year.

Kimura feels that Mingei is a chain reaction of mass production and consequently there is a time that we can pick a work with good quality among them. In old times good Mashiko ware was found in mass produced works that were made by unknown potters. How about today? Because of this natural reaction against mass production, Kimura may devote much time to the making of one bowl for drinking powdered green tea.

Kimura is unusual in that he has only one assistant, (who happens to be Kimura's son-in-law), working for him; and the assistant, like Kimura, works on whatever moves him at the time. As can be gathered by the above, Kimura is an individualist who prefers to work alone. Instead of producing vast quantities of pottery, Kimura concentrates on producing a few pieces of fine quality, however, ill health has prevented him from creating any recent works.

At the base of a small mountain a short distance north of Mashiko town there is an area called "The Place of Quietness". Here is found Gen Murata's residence and kiln.

He is, in comparison, a new-comer to the area. He originally came from Ishikawa Prefecture where the center of activity and culture is Kyoto, not Tokyo. Students from there usually went to school in Kyoto and since Kyoto has traditionally been the cultural center for centuries, it is only natural for people to still consider

Fig. 48. Gen Murata working in his studio.

it such. Murata originally desired to become a painter and went to see Shigetaro Kuroda, a well-known painter of that time, wanting to become his student. Unfortunately Kuroda was in Europe at the time, but upon the encouragement of a man who was taking care of the place in Kuroda's absence, Murata stayed long enough to learn the basics of painting from this painter-caretaker in residence.

Later he went to Tokyo, caught up by the then current prole-

tarian movement. This was immediately after the Russian Revolution and the long oppressed labor-movements were gaining momentum by the influence from Japan's next door giant. The sudden "Manchurian Incident" (1913-33) fed more fuel to the flames of unrest, and Murata found himself very involved in groups troubled by these events. Needless to say, at this time Murata had very little time to devote to the pursuit of aesthetics.

The government's violent suppression of these rebelling groups came close to Murata, and as his intimate friends were arrested one by one he and others like him had many second thoughts as to, is this really worthwhile or, will this have all been done in vain. As the movements became close to being nearly subdued, Murata joined the army and was sent to northern China.

More than two years later he returned to Japan. The war was over and the future of Japan was not in the hands of the average Japanese. Murata decided to settle in Mashiko due to his great admiration of Shoji Hamada. He had admired Hamada's work for a number of years, but because of his other activities, found no time to produce, himself. His dissatisfaction with himself led him to make the final decision that this was the time to pursue what he felt was his true desire. Japan was a defeated country. Political interests were gone, drained by the many years of unsuccessful, and for his part unwanted war. What was there to continue living

for, if not the arts that can give the beaten soul so much fervor to live. He had ignored this aspect in the past and felt dissatisfaction with himself for fostering such neglect.

When he had been younger, his father had been an ardent collector of antiques. He remembered how at the time he had criticized his father for having interest in "that old junk" and also for his conservative attitudes. As Gen grew older, he was very surprised to find that he himself somehow had acquired interest in the same things he had formerly despised. He started collecting antiques, "A chip off the old block", he reluctantly admits. Interest in antiques and pottery filled his mind.

It is said that Mashiko has a time-honored tradition, based on Karatsu ware. Murata says that it's because of the relationship of artisans who went from one place to another, bringing the Karatsu ware influence into Mashiko. After spending three years as Hamada's apprentice, Murata settled in Mashiko and he, for the most part, made articles of daily use for farmers in that area. He started using the kick-wheel and has continued using it to the present. His dislike for the electric wheel comes from the fact that one has to adapt to the speed and rhythm of the wheel. On a kick-wheel the speed and rhythm is made by the potter, therefore, the potter is in full control of what is happening. Murata's contention is to blend his rather modern attitudes of beauty with the old Mingei attitudes and blend something into what will even-

tually be his. He applies this philosophy to all his work. He is now concentrating on the making of tea bowls.

In 1924 when Shoji Hamada moved to Mashiko, he stayed at the home of the Sakuma family for four months. While having Hamada as his guest, Sakuma learned much. At that time Sakuma was twenty-five and Hamada thirty. Since his father taught him how to use the wheel, he knew the techniques but had not studied other than as his father's student. He was throwing automatically with little thought of experimentation until he met Hamada. Sakuma could not help but wonder why a man like Hamada who had just retuned to Japan from abroad came to a quiet, rather unknown farming community like Mashiko. At that time the best known and most renowned potters were in the Kyoto area. In comparison to the common utensils produced at Mashiko, the things from Kyoto were far more beautiful and splendid. Hamada disagreed with this. He said that the wares from Mashiko were far underestimated. In the Mashiko products was found purity. Especially in the blacks, regular white and carmel brown or amber glazes. Sakuma then asked Hamada what purity was.

According to Hamada, purity is the beauty that came only from the locality. The products of Kyoto and Seto resorted to artifice and didn't have pureness. Sakuma learned much from this man who loved to yield a reason for everything.

Toward the end of the same year, Hamada had his first exhibition at Kamoida in Tokyo. All the pottery in the exhibition was

made at the Sakuma kiln. It was a grand event not only for Sakuma, but also for everyone in Mashiko to think that the works made in a

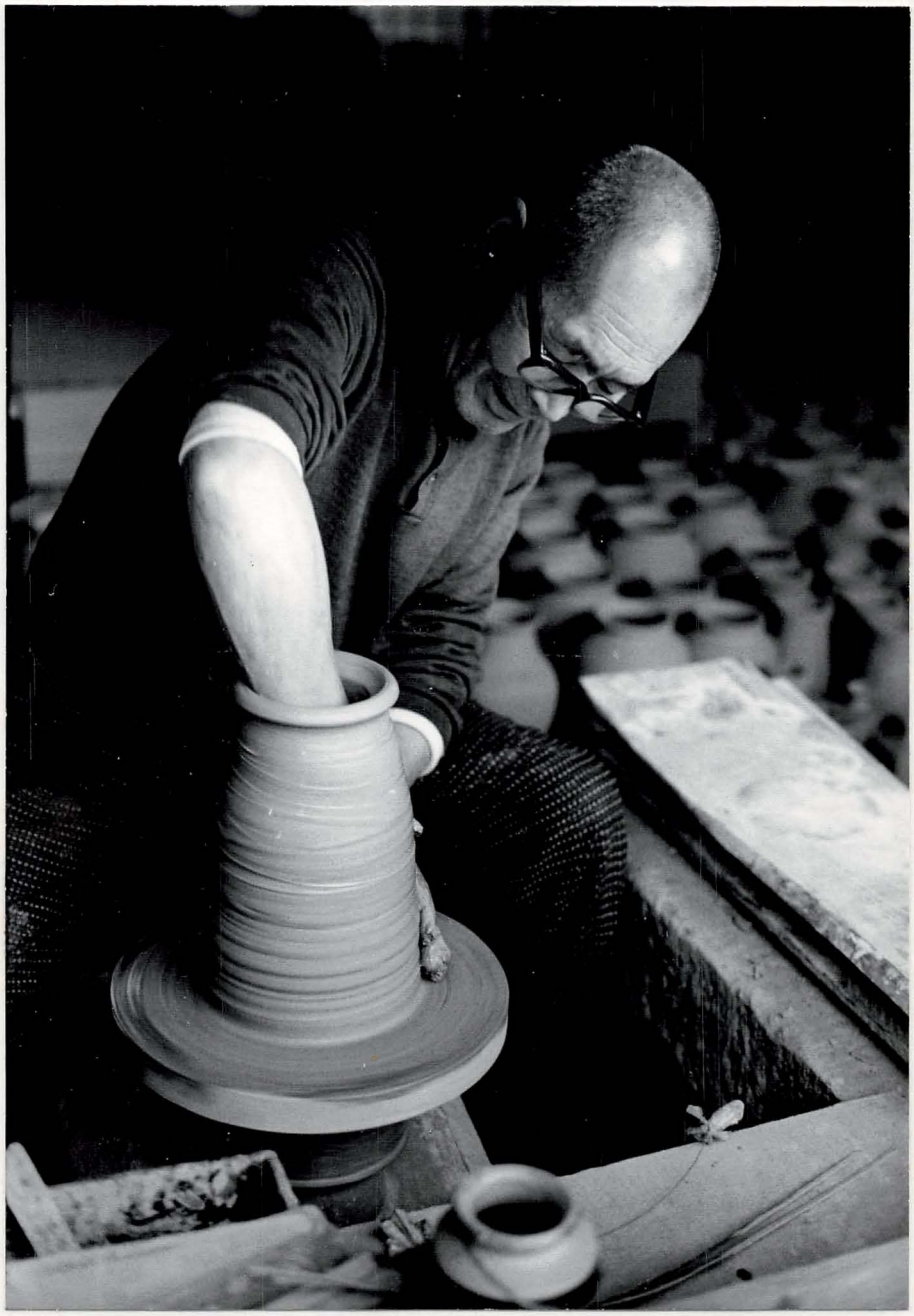

Fig. 49. Totaro Sakuma throwing a large jar on the wheel.

Mashiko kiln were displayed at one of the first-class exhibition halls in Tokyo. The exhibit attracted many people and the pieces were sold at good prices. Sakuma was completely enamored of Hamada's work and threw himself into the Mingei movement. Hamada puzzled Sakuma by telling him that he could copy Hamada's works until he understood himself, but he should discontinue copying, when he became aware of his own works.

As with many men of those times, the Second World War took Sakuma from Mashiko into the army to various regions of China, however, it didn't interrupt his study of pottery. Whenever opportunities arose, Sakuma found the various ceramics of China fascinating and sketched scores of pots for future study. Upon returning to Japan, Sakuma remembered the excellence of Chinese ceramics and with

Fig. 50. The garden in front of Sakuma's house.

the previously learned philosophies of Hamada, gradually developed a style of his own. Later Sakuma's works were acknowledged by Soetsu Yanagi.

Sakuma is noted for his wheel-throwing ability. Since he learned the technique at an early age from his father, the procedure is a natural activity to him and he is unusual among the well-known potters of Mashiko in that he prefers the electric potter's wheel over the hand-turned or kick wheel. Large jars with persimmon designs are one of Sakuma's trademarks and while throwing them he imagines that the jars take on the physical shape of himself. If one should personally know Sakuma, it is said that the jars do resemble him in personality and physical features. Sakuma is quoted as saying, "I received my body from my parents, but learned theory and technique from Hamada and Yanagi. I make bowls and cups out of the clay that I dig myself from a little hill behind my house. I would like to leave things for reference for the future, so future people can see what we have done".

Fig. 51. Totaro Sakuma: The brush painting of persimmons is one of Sakuma's trademarks.

Tatsuzo Shimaoka was born in 1918 and was raised in a well-known residential section of Tokyo. After high school, he entered the Department of Ceramics in the Tokyo Institute of Technology. He studied the scientific and technological approach to ceramics and received formal lectures from Seiichi Okuda, a well-known authority of ceramic history. Shoji Hamada also graduated from this school and returned occasionally to instruct; one of his students was Shimaoka. At this time Hamada found Shimaoka to be a worthy student and agreed to take him on as one of his apprentice students after his graduation in 1941. His ambitions were interrupted, however, for after graduation he was taken into the army and sent to Burma with the Japanese invasion forces. The latter part of the war found him in Thailand and he was forced to remain there one year, before he was able to make his way back to Japan. In 1945 he returned to Japan and did various things for a livelihood until he was finally able to fulfill his dream of becoming Hamada's apprentice. In 1953, after three years of apprenticeship, he had gained enough prowess to become an independent potter and built a kiln near Hamada's on the northern edge of Mashiko town.

"It has been said that in the old days a good potter is found in a community of people all doing activities related to each other. The spirit of pottery making spreads among the group, building momentum as it goes". Shimaoka finds this also true today.

Fig. 52. Tatsuzo Shimaoka applying ears and making rope impressions in some of his large jars.

He has eight workers who are permanent employees and various numbers of apprentices at different times. Shimaoka, being able to speak English, takes on foreign apprentices as well as Japanese apprentices, but insists that the foreign apprentices learn Japanese as soon as possible for he finds speaking English for a long period of time tiring. So far Shimaoka's foreign apprentices have all adapted to Japanese life very well. He feels the reason for

this is that the apprentice's main goal is to learn pottery and since this has always been fulfilled, satisfaction has resulted. According to Shimaoka's philosophy, pottery is created by the group, not by one individual, and the pottery from his kiln can be considered as the results of the efforts of the group, not Shimaoka's alone. "In this world a potter's name is so valuable. People sometimes buy pottery just for the name. The people of the future will be the ones who decide the merits of a piece of pottery, not the present people."

Shimaoka is greatly concerned about the things produced in the community that he is part of. He says, "Normally in order to produce good pottery, the following aspects are very important. Their

Fig. 53. Shimaoka's residence and one of his kilns. Crocks of glaze are sitting outside one of his workrooms.

importance ranks in order as follows..... (1) clay, (2) firing and (3) workmanship. However, the opposite idea is governed by the present-day patrons; that is, according to them, workmanship, (individualism), is taken seriously. This I cannot agree with."

In producing pottery, the materials are most important. A wheel is added; turned; clay is thrown; various other things occur and the piece is fired. All these take place no matter who is doing the work. Lack of skill here means the destruction of whatever great idea was intended with no regard to the above processes. Therefore, we cannot insist on individuality alone.

As pottery has a long term tradition which was introduced into Japan from China and Korea, we cannot ignore the past. Shimaoka's philosophy is to develop his work with much regard to the past. "It is a natural phenomenon to blend the modern with the traditional. A piece of pottery should be convenient to use and also there should exist beauty in it." Products of the Shimaoka community kiln are absorbed in beauty and genuineness.

Shimaoka has been abroad two times, the first time to various places in Canada, America and Mexico where he had exhibits and the second time to America again where he was guest lecturer and instructor at two colleges in California for summer schools. On his second return to Japan he stopped in Europe and spent one week with Bernard Leach at St. Ives in England. During Shimaoka's travels he has gathered much material and employed it in his work although he still

Fig. 54. The simple, yet elegant workroom of Tatsuzo Shimaoka.

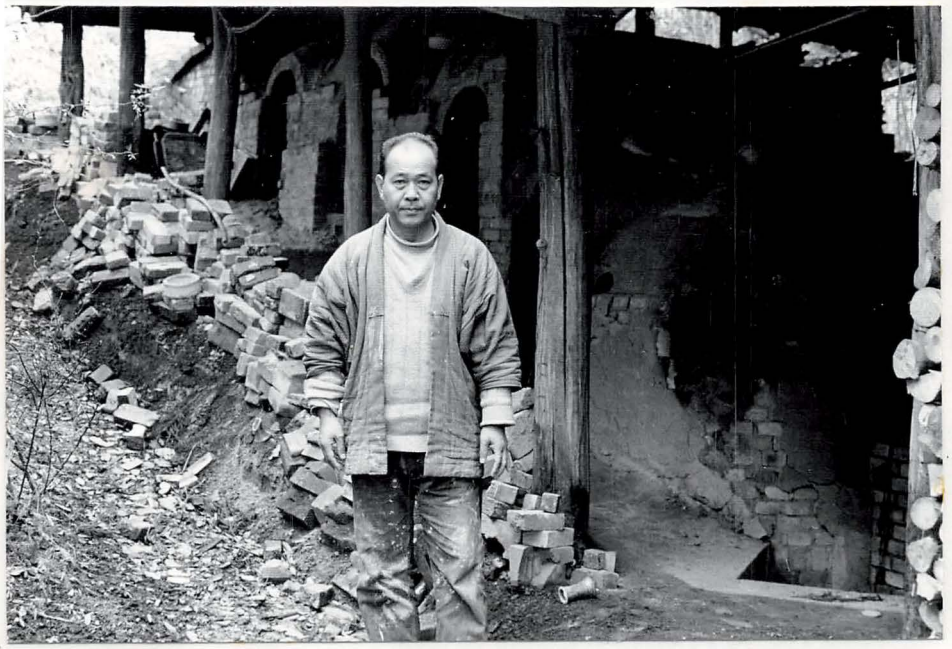

Fig. 55. Shimaoka by one of his kilns.

Fig. 56. Tatsuzo Shimaoka: Wheel-thrown bottles and jars showing the typical Shimaoka mishima application.

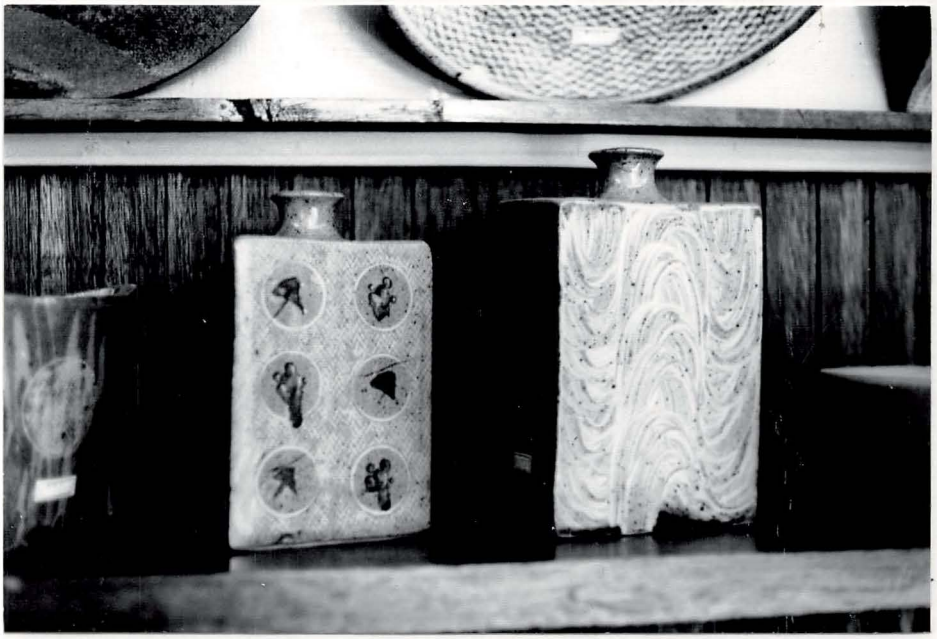

Fig. 57. Tatsuzo Shimaoka: Triangular slab bottles with wheel-thrown necks.

Fig. 58. Tatsuzo Shimaoka: A teacup set for husband and wife. Famous Japanese potters rarely sign their work, however, they do sign the kiri wood boxes, thereby increasing the value.

maintains the distinctive Shimaoka style.

Producing pieces for the many yearly exhibits in Japan occupies most of Shimaoka's time, regardless, he takes time from his work to discuss pottery with the many visiting ceramic enthusiasts who happen by. The simple, yet elegant, private workroom of Shimaoka's was one aspect that greatly impressed the author. Whereas most workrooms involved in the production of pottery in Japan are very cluttered, dirty, damp and small; Shimaoka's workroom is large with a hot air heater and a stereo speaker system. Such comfort is only pertinent for the many hours, including nights, that Shimaoka

spends working. Although Shimaoka does plan on an exhibit in Boston in the spring of 1972, he has little desire for the export of his work; the reasons being the wish to avoid the red tape involved in exporting and the abundance of eager purchasers in Japan regardless of price. To personally talk to Tatsuzo Shimaoka is to be immediately impressed by the warm personality of this man who, being relatively young now, is certain to be one of the great potters of Japan.

By the previous mention of only well-known, older potters, it would seem that Mashiko is a pottery village consisting of permanent employees of kilns, student-apprentices and established potters alone. This is not the case. Due to the present economic boom of Japan and the affluent society's appreciation for the arts, there is room for younger, relatively unknown potters, to earn a good living without teaching, (something almost unheard of in the United States). Because Mashiko is in the country, there is space to build a residence and kiln and an almost immediate guarantee of sales providing a certain quality is maintained. Such is the case of Shoji Kamota.

Kamota came to Mashiko twelve years ago at the age of twenty-six. Having studied under Kenkichi Tomimoto at the Kyoto Municipal Art College gave Kamota much experience in the experimental techniques of Kyoto. Various exhibits have found the works of Kamota on numerous occasions including the "Japan Art Festival" in New York in 1966. Working alone with no workers or students is to Kamota's

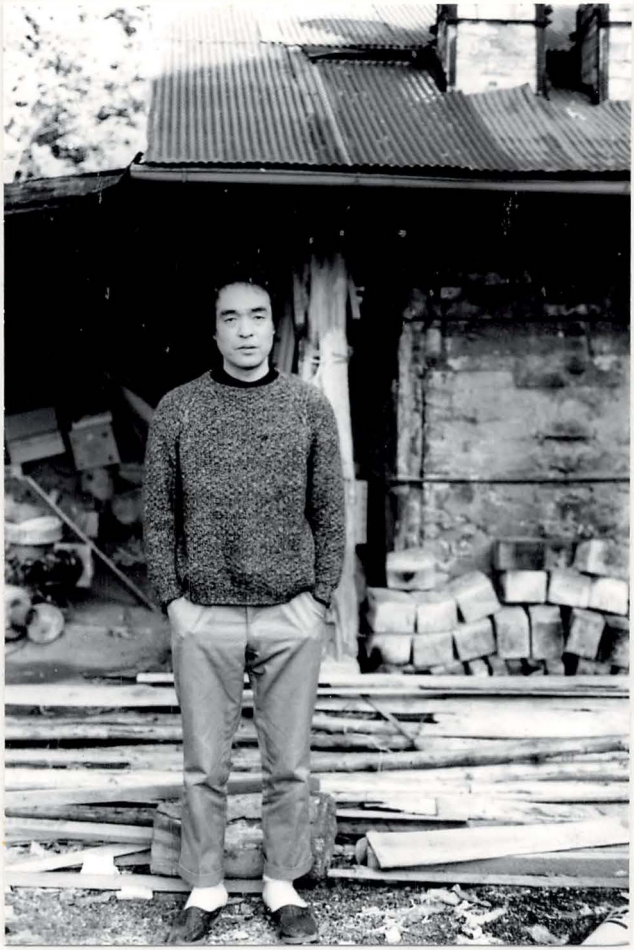

Fig. 59. Shoji Kamota standing by his kiln.

liking. In spite of the fact that he was born and raised in Osaka, he finds the turmoil of the big city very unpleasant and prefers the quietness of the country for his work. Being an experimentalist, Kamota works often in the coil and slab-method and currently his experiments with the black clay of Iwate Prefecture, (northern Honshu), has taken much of his time, thus leaving his kiln temporarily idle.

Shoji Kamota is used here only as an example of one young potter in Mashiko, for there are other potter friends of Kamota's who are enjoying the same type of productive life and are equally successful.

Fig. 60. Shoji Kamota: A large, square, hand-built plate.

CONCLUDING STATEMENT

The Mashiko of today is very different from the Mashiko that Keizaburo Otsuka knew. Compared to former days, the rolling hills are somewhat denuded of trees due to the demand of firewood for the kilns; however, the rice paddies bordered with plumes of bamboo are still present, sometimes reminding one of an old Japanese wood block print. The town has increased in population and the most modern conveniences are present. An average of three hours from Tokyo by train or car does not isolate Mashiko; however, the distance is just great enough to save the town from traffic congestion, air pollution and other unpleasant conditions that plague large cities. These desirable qualities plus the traditional reputations maintained by the former true Mingei potters in addition to the more advanced techniques of the artists having formal education in ceramics have blended together with elements of meritable enterprise management. The result is something of economic and aesthetic success.

Merits are due to historical facts and traditions; and more profound are the people who are actually involved in the happenings of present-day Mashiko. The workers and families of workers are all involved in the production of pottery. These people live from childhood on with objects of beauty around them constantly. The shop keepers and brokers maintain reputations of service that are duly considerate of the potters; the success of this town does not

forget the influences that have led to its success. Influences from such ancient pottery as Karatsu ware and Shigaraki ware and the demand for pottery by the tea ceremony are certainly partially responsible for what is happening today. The Mingei movement and the coming of technically trained men such as Hamada and Shimaoka, in addition to the presence of natives of Mashiko, such as Sakuma and Kimura, have all blended together and resulted in the production of world renowned pottery. The numerous potters have certainly profited by each others' presence, and their characteristic qualities have expanded without losing their individualism. All the desirable elements of pottery tradition result in the attraction of young talent such as Kamota and others like him who will eventually be the talented masters of a future generation. The combined techniques as a result of knowledgable experimentation with the added ingenuity and ambition will certainly result in beauty to equal that of the works of Ninsei and Kenzan of the past.

MAP OF SEVEN JAPANESE KILNS ON THE ISLANDS OF HONSHU AND KYUSHU

1. Karatsu - Saga Prefecture
2. Bizen - Okayama Prefecture
3. Tamba - Hyogo Prefecture
4. Shigaraki - Shiga Prefecture
5. Iga - Mie Prefecture
6. Seto - Aichi Prefecture
7. Mashiko - Tochigi Prefecture

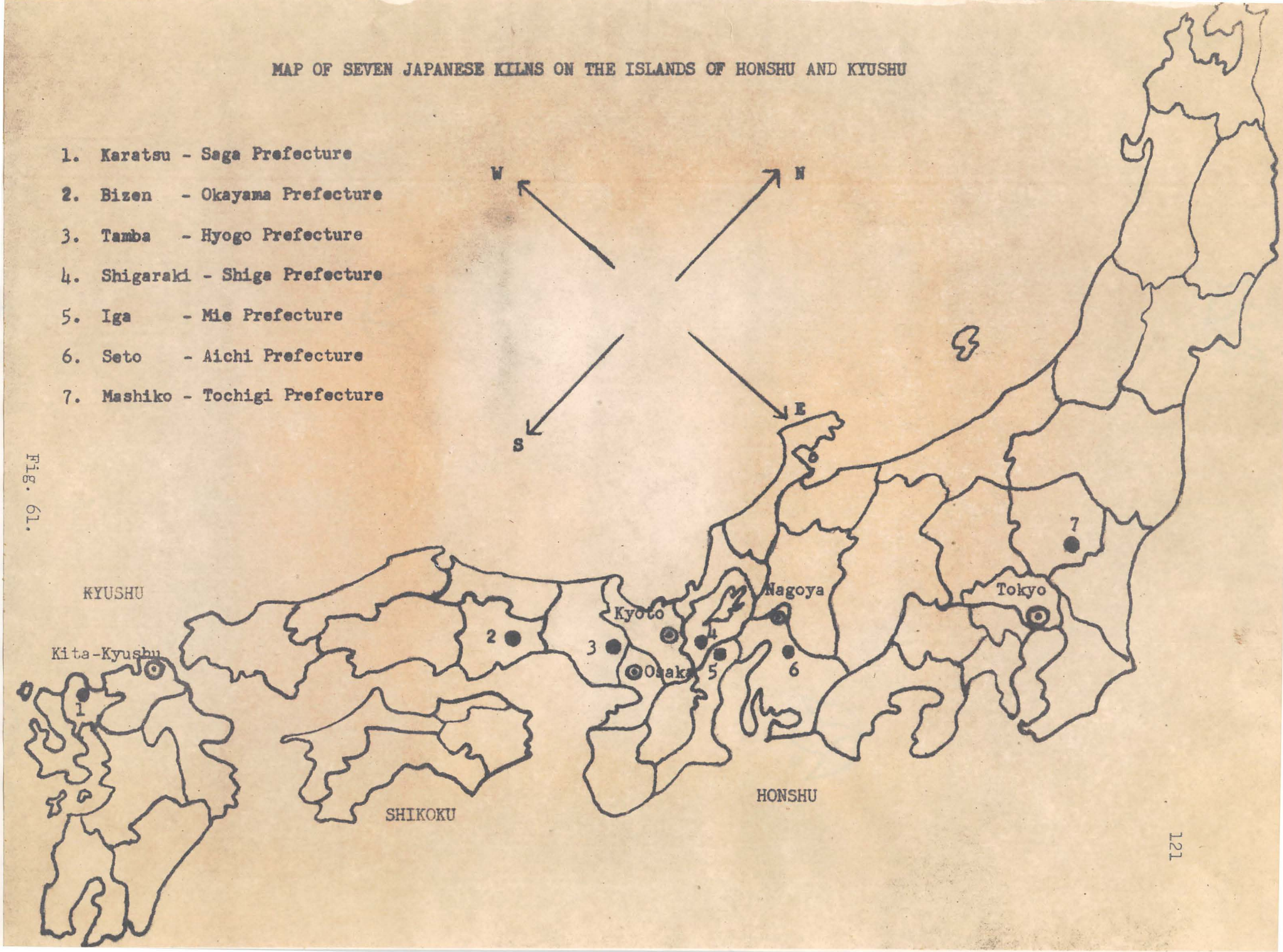

Fig. 61.

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* These books are written in Japanese only and the titles have been translated into English for the purpose of this bibliography.